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DATE DISTRIBUTED 9/26/08 DATE OF ARTICLE 9/20/08 NEWSPAPER FWST

DISCOUNT RETAIL

99 Cents Only Stores is pulling out of Texas to focus on other markets

The company says it lost \$15 million on revenues of \$120 million in the year ending June 28.

By SANDRA BAKER
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FORT WORTH — California-based 99 Cents Only Stores is pulling out of Texas because of poor performance and will instead focus on its markets in California, Arizona and Nevada.

The discount retailer has 48 stores in Texas, including 13 in the Metroplex. The company said store associates and workers at its Texas distribution center will receive severance packages.

It did not say when the stores would begin closing.

In Tarrant County, it has stores at 6732 Camp Bowie Blvd. in Fort Worth, 6246 Rufe Snow Drive in North Richland Hills, 3901 Colleyville Blvd. in Colleyville and 1200 N. Main St.



This 99 Cents Only Store in Colleyville is one of 13 in the Metroplex. STAR-TELEGRAM ARCHIVES/IAN McVEA

in Euless.

The company said it lost \$15 million on revenues of \$120 million in the year ending June 28.

“Although progress was continually made over the years, we were still losing money in Texas, and we determined that it was not likely we would achieve profitability in the near future,” Eric Schiffer, chief executive of 99 Cents Only Stores, said in a statement.

The company has four stores in Dallas, two in Garland, and one each in Lewisville, Irving and Plano.

Earlier this month, 99 Cents Only Stores raised its prices almost a penny, to 99.99 cents, its first-ever increase since opening in 1982. The retailer has 230 stores in California, Arizona and Nevada.

SANDRA BAKER, 817-390-7727

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HEALTH

Study: More fast food found in lower-income areas

A *Star-Telegram* analysis shows that such neighborhoods tend to attract fewer nutritious alternatives.

By BRYON OKADA and JEFF CLAASSEN
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Pick any busy intersection in Tarrant County. What food options do you see?

At Brentwood Stair Road and Handley Drive in east Fort Worth are The Kolache Shoppe, Honey Donut, Taco Bueno, QuikTrip, Domino's Pizza and Williams Chicken.

Go to Airport Freeway and Main Street in Euless, and it's Wendy's, Jack in the Box, McDonald's, Long John Silver's, Waffle House, Starbucks, Sonic, Donut Land, Whataburger, Taco Bueno, Braum's, Saviano's, Pop-eyes, and two mom and pop groceries.

On certain streets in Arlington, you can find a plethora of small Southeast Asian noodle shops and Mexican taquerias.

In Southlake, there are shopping centers with no fast food and others with plenty of golden arches and "more chikin."

What you see depends on where you are.

A *Star-Telegram* analysis shows that North Texas neighborhoods with lower incomes tend to attract a disproportionate number of convenience stores and fast-food restaurants and fewer healthy alternatives.

It's obvious in southeast Fort Worth near Mitchell Boulevard Ele-

mentary School, where Dr. Richard Long of John Peter Smith Hospital is involved in a project to reduce obesity.

"That first layer is all fast-food places — a lot of fried-chicken places and convenience stores," Long said. "You really have to get at least a mile away from the school before you start to see any businesses at all."

The issue is not so much the presence of fast food. It's a popular, affordable choice.

The concern comes when fast food is the only option.

This summer, the Los Angeles City Council voted 12-0 to place a one-year moratorium on new fast-food establishments in high-minority, lower-income neighborhoods in south Los Angeles.

The move was intended to give planners time to study the effects of "the over-proliferation of fast-food restaurants in these communities."

Past ordinances restricting restaurant planning were designed for traffic control, officials said. This is the first time the city has tried to control urban development because of public health.

A 2007 *Los Angeles Times* analysis of 8,200 restaurants found that south Los Angeles had the highest concentration of fast-food restaurants and far fewer grocery stores. The area had an adult obesity rate of 30 percent, compared with 20.9 percent county-wide.

The *Star-Telegram* analysis showed that fast-food restaurants make up 70 percent or more of the eateries in low-income areas like east Fort Worth, much higher than the countywide rate of 48 percent.

But the analysis of 4,695 restaurants and food stores found some places that buck those trends.

Fast food abounds in west Arlington's well-to-do 76016 ZIP code, mostly because of hamburger, pizza and fried-chicken restaurants along Green Oaks Boulevard and Little Road.

Some low-income areas, including parts of Fort Worth's north and south sides, rank high for quality food stores because of their large number of chain grocery stores and neighborhood bakeries, not including doughnut shops.

But in most places, healthy food choices are scarce in low-income areas and plentiful in high-income areas.

Some signs suggest that those patterns affect residents' health.

East Arlington's 76014 ZIP code had one of the county's highest obesity rates in 2004, ranging between 44 and 59 percent, according to Tarrant County Public Health.

The ZIP code also had one of the highest rates of fast-food restaurants, 70 percent.

ZIP codes 76112, on Fort Worth's east side, and 76016, on Arlington's west side, also reported high rates of obesity and fast-food restaurants.

By contrast, wealthy areas like Colleyville, Southlake and Fort Worth's Cultural District reported low rates of obesity and fast-food restaurants and a high concentration of high-quality food stores, including large-chain grocery stores, farmers markets, bakeries and health-food stores.

Online exclusive

To view an interactive map that shows fast-food restaurants, food stores and median income, go to star-telegram.com/extras

How did that get on my plate?

North Texas school districts have been grappling with nutritional content for years. Not so much with cities, where planners generally ignore nutritional content in dealing with prospective restaurants, various officials said. As long as applicants conform to zoning, menus take a back seat to noise and aesthetics.

Health inspections focus on sanitation and the risk for communicable diseases, said Elmer DePaula, Fort Worth consumer health manager.

Residents' obesity is not a factor, although it should be, Arlington planning manager Maria Carbajal said.

"I was fortunate to travel to Europe, where they walk a lot, and it makes a real difference," Carbajal said.

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To that end, Arlington has initiated special zoning in its entertainment district near the new Cowboys stadium to spur pedestrian-friendly development. The idea, Carbal said, is that if you build a denser, walkway-intensive development, it will subtly begin to shift people's thinking toward a healthier lifestyle. Demand for healthier food would naturally follow — and where there's demand, businesses will seek to satisfy it.

Southlake's downtown district is already well on its way with the establishment of Southlake Town Square and, across the street, Central Market. Again, the idea is to build so that people get out of their cars and onto the sidewalk.

"It focuses on building design, the relationship of the building to the streetscape as well as pedestrian environment, and is based on a set of urban-design principles," said Ken Baker, Southlake's director of planning and development services.

Development in Euless is following suit. New applicants in projects along Texas 121 must obtain a specific-use permit from the City Council for a "restaurant with a drive-through," said Chris Barker, planning and development manager.

At Glade Parks, a planned development off Texas 121, drive-through restaurants are banned, Barker said. Bank drive-throughs and curbside service for restaurants are still allowed, however.

Still, North Texas city officials are careful not to appear to be dictating choices to residents.

It's apparently a prudent course, based on the sentiments of many residents.

"I eat out every Saturday," said Giselda Guerrero, 20, at the Whataburger on Beach Street in Fort Worth. "People can do whatever they want. No one should be telling them what to do. I love fast food; I love Whataburger. I would be totally against the city doing anything like L.A."

Fort Worth Councilmen Jungus Jordan, Danny Scarth and Frank Moss — who represent areas with the highest concentrations of fast food — said they would oppose a moratorium here.

In east Fort Worth, Scarth and Moss said, it's not just an inability to bring in sit-down restaurants; they're having problems hanging on to the restaurants they have.

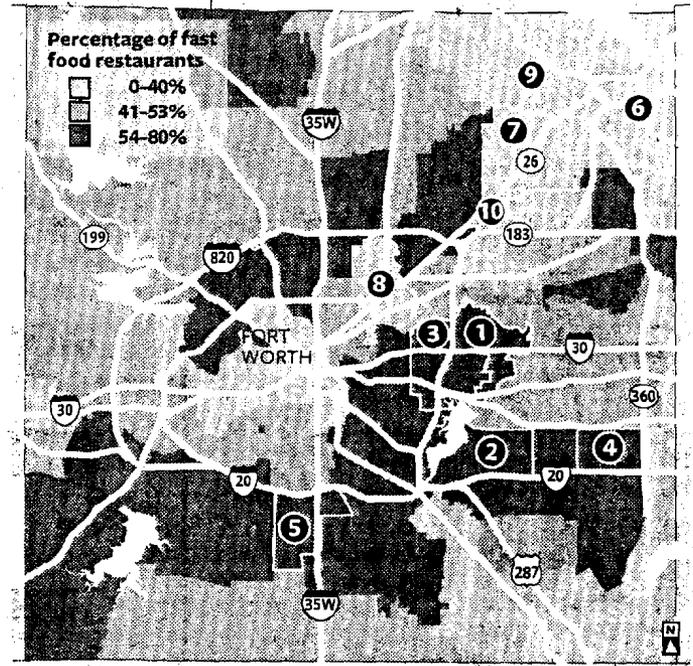
"We have barbecue and fried-chicken restaurants, and many of those are closing up," Moss said. "Moratoriums are a luxury we can't afford."

Once an area is labeled as high-minority or low-income or as an area where new houses aren't being built, it gets harder to attract restaurants, Moss said. And, he said, there's a perception that minorities won't patronize sit-down restaurants.

Jordan and Scarth pointed to efforts toward transit-oriented development — high-density, mixed-use development around rail lines — as an attempt to zone in a balance of healthier places to eat.

But in general, they said, the market should determine what stays and what goes. If there's a buck to be made, won't somebody move in to make it?

Prevalence of fast-food restaurants in Tarrant County



ZIP codes with the highest percentage of fast food

ZIP	City/area	Pop.*	Median Income*	Eateries	Fast food
1	76120 Fort Worth, east	13,150	\$43,269	24	75.0%
2	76016 Arlington, west	32,164	\$82,695	35	71.4%
3	76112 Fort Worth, Handley	42,966	\$37,007	44	70.5%
4	76014 Arlington, east	33,214	\$48,084	20	70.0%
5	76134 Fort Worth, far south	21,594	\$44,547	25	68.0%

ZIP codes with the lowest percentage of fast food

6	76051 Grapevine	47,746	\$80,229	166	25.9%
7	76034 Colleyville	23,261	\$134,987	41	26.8%
8	76117 Haltom City	29,450	\$40,806	28	32.1%
9	76092 Southlake	24,578	\$165,035	92	33.7%
10	76054 Hurst, north	12,785	\$85,906	40	35.0%

*2007 numbers

Sources: Public health departments

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Health-food options?

For nearly four decades, the McCarthy family has operated Sunflower Shoppe on Curzon Avenue off Camp Bowie Boulevard in west Fort Worth. In the early days, Bettye and Harlan McCarthy operated it as a niche health-food store, selling herbs and vitamins with little or no direct competition. The store gradually expanded to include natural food and organic produce. In April 1994, a second store was opened, called Healthy Approach Market, off Texas 121 in Colleyville. It will also begin using the name Sunflower Shoppe in October.

Both locations were selected because of traffic and visibility, said Erika McCarthy, who handles marketing.

The Fort Worth shop's customer base is mostly white upper-middle-class families from the Ridglea, Monticello and Arlington Heights neighborhoods. The Colleyville store's customers generally fit the same demographic, only from nearby Northeast Tarrant cities.

McCarthy says immigrant families are often well-versed in natural foods and herbs. But there are multiple potential barriers to a family-owned health food store opening in areas like southeast Fort Worth or east Arlington. They include language, higher prices and less familiarity with what customers want.

Fearing it would "spread ourselves too thin," the owners of Sunflower Shoppe aren't considering adding stores, Chief Executive Richard Bradford said.

But the question remains: If they did build it, would other kinds of customers come?

At both stores, minorities account for only 10 percent of the customer base.

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REAL ESTATE

Eules

1. Office leases

610 Industrial Blvd.

Allied Lube leased 2,061 square feet. Lone Star Health Systems leased 2,308 square feet.

Broker: Cody Payne negotiated the transaction.

Fort Worth

2. Distribution centers

Mercantile Center

Bob Moore Construction completed two speculative distribution centers totaling 319,300 square feet.

Hardy McCullah/MLM Architects is the architect.

3. Medical office purchases

7633 Bellaire Drive S.

Gibson Asset Management purchased several medical offices in River Hills Medical Office Condominium Development. The square footage totals 5,490 square feet.

Broker: Bill Jordan of Moss Jordan & Associates represented the developer, TAK Enterprises.

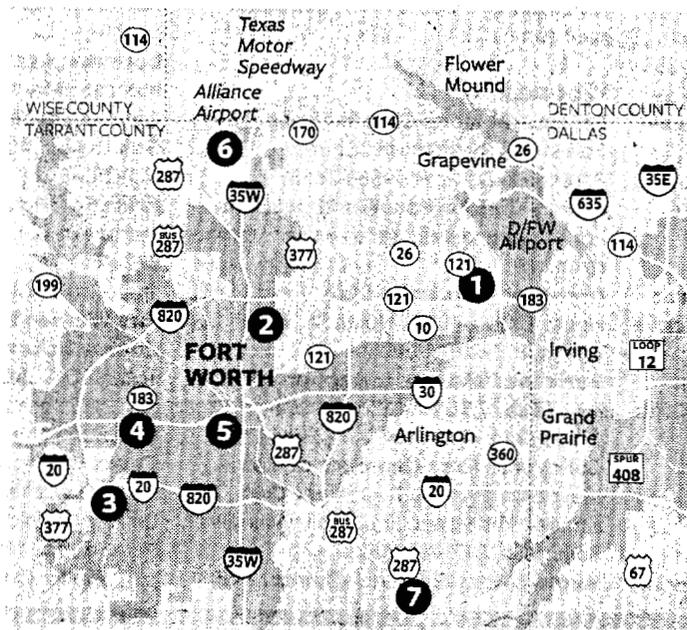
4. Shopping center sold

6949 Green Oaks Road

The Shops at Ridgmar, a nearly 42,000-square-foot strip shopping center adjacent to Ridgmar mall, has been bought by a partnership of the James R. Harris Co., called 6900 Ridgmar Retail Group. The center is nearly fully leased, and the name is being changed by the new owners to Ridgmar North. Weight Watchers, Beneficial Finance, Catherine's apparel shop and Sewing World are some of the tenants of the center, which was developed by Stanley Peskin in the early 1980s.

Brokers: Rodger Chieffalo with Chieffalo Realty represented the buyers. The center was sold by WCJ Ridgmar 98 Ltd., a partnership of the William C. Jennings real estate company.

TRANSACTIONS



STAR-TELEGRAM

5. Building sale

1719 8th Ave.

Cook Children's Health Care System has bought this former Carnival Food Store location. The 28,000-square-foot building will be renovated for use as offices by the children's health care provider. There are about 2 acres at the site.

Brokers: Ryan Matthews with Jones Lang LaSalle represented the buyer. David Walters with Quine & Associates represented the seller, the limited partnership TSCA-50. TSCA-50 bought the property in 1998.

Haslet

6. Lease

880 Blue Mound Road W.

Tim Kempka leased 1,500 square feet at Suite 108 for an auto sales business.

Broker: Leah Haroldson of Ron Sturgeon Real Estate is the leasing manager.

Mansfield

7. Lease

1206 Mansfield Highway

Gary Dimsdle leased 1,800 square feet for a transmission repair business.

Broker: Leah Haroldson of Ron Sturgeon Real Estate is the leasing manager.

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EATS BEAT

■ Fall is Greek Food Festival time, and Dallas' is this weekend.

The Dallas dinner buffet features souvlakia, spanakopita and pastizio, along with Greek salad. It's \$15, or \$10 for lunch. Look for it at 13555 Hillcrest Road, 972-233-4880, www.greekfestivalof-dallas.com.

Mark a calendar for the Mid-Cities festival Oct. 10-12 in Euless (www.midcitiesgreekfest.info) and the Fort Worth festival Nov. 7-9 (www.fortworthgreekfestival.com).

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BRIEFS

Trinity club sponsors pet fair

EULESS — Trinity High School's Girls Awareness Program is sponsoring a pet fair and adoption event from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday in the school parking lot, 500 N. Industrial. Pets will be available for adoptions, and dog baths will be offered. A pet trainer and a pet groomer will be on hand to answer questions. The club will have a drawing for two baskets of dog and cat goodies. Money raised goes to the city of Euless' animal shelter and GAP's spay/neuter program.

— Matt Frazier

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

New projects unveiled for Hurst-Euless-Bedford

City managers in Bedford, Euless and Hurst discuss development, taxes and public improvements at the annual State of the Cities.

By **ADRIENNE NETTLES**
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HURST — City managers from Hurst, Euless and Bedford unveiled plans Thursday to bring hotels and conference centers to their cities during the HEB Chamber of Commerce's annual State of the Cities breakfast.

City, county and state officials including state Rep. Todd Smith and Tarrant County Commissioner Gary Fickes were briefed on the projects at the Holiday Inn Express in Hurst.

"We have a lot going on in our cities," Hurst City Manager Allan Weegar said. Weegar, Bedford City Manager Beverly Queen and Euless Deputy City Manager Loretta Getchell all reported strong sales tax collections and stable property taxes in their cities, despite recent bad news about the nation's economy.

Amy McCall, marketing manager for Harris Methodist H.E.B. Hospital, also announced that the 13 hospitals under the Texas Health Resources system will undergo brand-name changes effective Jan. 1.

For example, Harris Methodist H.E.B.'s new name will

Highlights

City officials gave updates on key developments and projects in Hurst, Euless and Bedford:

Hurst

■ The city's new Heritage Village Plaza plans to open Fire Station No. 2 in November; a 40,000-square-foot senior center next September; and a 103-unit senior housing project in January 2010.

■ The Hurst Public Library is adding 12,000 square feet of meeting, office and programming space, which will include a public coffee bar. The project will be bid in early 2009 and expected to be completed a year later.

■ A \$300 million project in Town Center is being planned that will include office, retail and entertainment space along Thousand Oaks Drive. The project is at least three to five years out.

Bedford

■ The City Council has approved funding for studies on the city's retail base, a Texas 183 corridor expansion and the viability of building a town center.

■ Renovations have been completed on Fire Stations No. 1 and 2, and the remodeling of Fire Station No. 3 should begin soon.

■ The city is designing renovations to the former Food Lion grocery store at 2424 Forest Ridge Drive to become the city's new library.

Euless

■ Five residential developments are under construction, and a three-story LaQuinta Inn and Suites hotel and a Comfort Suites on the Texas 183 service road just east of Ector Drive are under construction. Also being built is a QuikTrip corporate office off Industrial Boulevard.

■ The Texas Star Conference Center at the Texas Star Golf Course is being expanded to accommodate groups of up to 300. The project will be completed in February.

■ A Family Life Center at Midway Park is being planned that will incorporate a senior citizen center and expand the recreation center.

be Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Hurst-Euless-Bedford, McCall said. that the hospitals are part of the same health system, she said.

The new brand names will help consumers realize

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