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## Katy weathered 2009 well, say leaders

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As 2009 faded in Katy's rearview mirror, it was clear the area had more positives to show for that troubled year than many other parts of the state and nation.

Whether in old town Katy or the suburban region as a whole, city and community officials were upbeat about the area's continued development in the year ahead.

In the city of Katy, the budget was tight, but a new municipal court building was almost completed in 2009 and was scheduled for an early 2010 opening. Work to expand and renovate the fire department also is well under way, thanks to bonds approved by Katy voters in 2007.

The city also took bids and was able to begin preliminary work on an overhaul of Avenue D, one of the town's major north-south thoroughfares

Thanks to a host of local donors and community volunteers, Katy PlayStation Park — the city's barrier-free playground — opened at 5611 Gardenia in 2009. The four-acre, \$820,000 playground is designed to be completely accessible for all children — regardless of physical or cognitive abilities — and was hailed as the largest such playground in the state.

### **Development continues**

Economic development slowed, but continued in 2009, as Katy further diversified its small-town economy. New hotels opened or were under construction near Katy Mills mall in 2009, and infrastructure like water and sewer lines are in the ground for an 87-acre mixed use Katy Main Street project that promises shops, restaurants and a grocery store next year.

Work on the 470-acre West Ten Business Park — for which the city annexed 159 acres in 2009 — continues slowly on Katy's western edge, said Mayor Don Elder.

"I think the economy slowed a lot of things in 2009," the mayor observed, pointing to sagging sales-tax revenue. "But we are so much better off than a lot of cities."

Elsewhere in the greater Katy area, construction on new hospitals along Interstate 10 picked up speed in 2009, along with other projects — like the 225,000-square-foot PathFinder Technology Center under construction near the Grand Parkway and I-10 — that will bring jobs to the area in 2010. PathFinder specializes in logging-while-drilling products and services.

"I think we did better than expected for a recession year," said Lance LaCour, president and CEO of the Katy Area Economic Development Council. "We have a lot of construction going on with the two hospitals. We've located some new restaurants.

We've got the PathFinder project going on.

"We're the No. 2 boom town in America, (according to Business Week.) We're probably No. 1 now that the community that was No. 1 is outside of Las Vegas and they're not doing so hot now."

**Read More:** <http://www.ultimatekaty.com/2010/01/katy-area-weathered-2009-well-say-community-leaders> .