

The City of **Cleveland** welcomed Chinese investors and dignitaries Wednesday, Aug. 16, at a ceremony to recognize residential and commercial developments that will shape the city's future.

China's **Dalian Yihai Enterprise Group**, which owns McKinley Development, has already invested \$10 million to create a 600-acre residential community called Grand Oaks Reserve, located at the east end of the SH 105 Bypass by **Cleveland** Middle School, and a 122-acre industrial park west of **Cleveland** on SH 105. The company projects to spend more than \$100 million more before the developments are complete.

Yuhai Zhao, chairman of the **Yihai Group**, through a translator, told the 100 or so people gathered for the ceremony at **Cleveland** City Hall that he knows **Cleveland** is the right location for this investment.

"I am confident that Grand Oaks Reserve and **Cleveland** West Industrial Park are the right choice of development in the city," he said. "I am sincerely grateful that we have chosen the right people to work with - and this is all of you, my friends. Thank you for your support. Precision and practicality are our guides, and love and commitment is our foundation."

David Nemeth, vice president of Willis-based McKinley Development, explained how the idea of developing in **Cleveland** really grew after meeting some of the city staff, namely Glen Barnhill, director of Development Services.

"I went into Mr. Barnhill's office regarding the property on the west side of town and he mentioned the piece of land we are using for Grand Oaks Reserve. We left that meeting with the feeling that we were among people of high integrity who have a deep love and commitment for their community," Nemeth said. "We left there really excited and wanted to do something really special."

The project grew into plans for a residential development of 976 single-family homes in three different categories, mostly determined by size and features. All will have at least three different elevation choices for a total of 77 options, Nemeth said. Custom homes will also increase the options for families wanting to live in the gated community.

The developer also has set aside dozens of acres at the entrance that will be used for stores, restaurants and businesses. Another portion of land will be used to develop 256 condominiums and an apartment complex.

"The thing we want to do is have a lot of diversity price-wise and have options so a lot of people will be open to the possibility of moving here. We hope to create a big, warm family atmosphere," he said.

The gated community also will feature a 39-acre manmade lake with homes wrapping around it, 9-10 pocket parks, a pet park, tennis and basketball courts, a nine-hole golf course, a resort-style pool and a golf clubhouse that will accommodate weddings, receptions and meetings.

"We think we have the right formula," Nemeth said.

With McKinley **Group's** development in the city, growth that has been projected for years appears to be a certainty. Former Mayor Niki Coats, instrumental in bringing the project to **Cleveland**, said that while **Cleveland** might be a city of 8,000 residents, it is a hub for 80,000 people who work, shop or do business in the city each day.

"This development is the very first of its kind for **Cleveland**, Texas, and Liberty County. We are confident it will be a success," he said.

Mayor Otis Cohn said that McKinley is wise to get in on the growth on the ground floor.

Cohn then echoed a message he shared during a recent speech for the Greater **Cleveland** Chamber of

Commerce. He encouraged people to share the good news of **Cleveland**. "If you know about it, crow about it," he said.

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