

Brothers plot Shawnee business center

by Mike W. Ray

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Bret and Chet Austin. (Maik Sabolich)

SHAWNEE – Two Oklahoma City brothers whose family roots are embedded in the Shawnee area are developing a new commercial center there.

Bret and Chet Austin bought 19 acres at 39th and Harrison in Shawnee earlier this year.

“We have enough land to build approximately 50,000 square feet of commercial space,” Bret Austin said.

The first building will encompass 12,000 square feet, he added. At the front of the property they plan to develop pad sites to

sell for commercial use. In the back will be pad sites for apartments, offices, etc., he said.

“This will be a new shopping district by the time we’re done,” Bret Austin said. “It’ll change Harrison.”

The new development is expected to be ready for occupancy sometime next year, he said.

“We’ve had several companies contacting us, and we’ve been talking to some prospects,” Bret Austin said.

The brothers already have constructed two retail buildings in Shawnee, and own 70 acres in nearby Dale known as Prairie Ridge Addition.

Their company, Prestige Development and Construction, also builds homes in Oklahoma City. “We are third-generation homebuilders,” Bret Austin said.

The brothers have been in the manufactured housing business along U.S. Highway 177 in Shawnee for 14 years.

Although the Austins live in Oklahoma City, they are developers in Shawnee for two principal reasons.

“Our family – parents, uncles, everybody – lives there,” Bret Austin said. “We’ve been associated with Shawnee for 50 years.”

There’s also an economic consideration, he said.

“There’s a lot of potential in the area,” Bret Austin said.