

Anchored in Growth

NEWSLETTER

LITTLE ELM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FROM THE DIRECTOR

If the last few months have felt busy around Little Elm, it's because they have been. New businesses have opened their doors, several projects have picked up momentum, and we've spent a lot of time meeting with operators who are seriously considering Little Elm for their next location. It's encouraging to see the interest, especially in a time when many communities are slowing down. The activity we're seeing is a reminder that thoughtful planning and strong partnerships continue to pay off.

A lot of the work during this time of year revolves around conversations—meeting with business owners, walking sites with developers, and helping people understand what makes Little Elm different. Not every discussion turns into a project right away, but those relationships matter. Many of the businesses opening today started with conversations months—or even years—ago.

Over the next quarter, you'll likely see more signs of progress around town. Some projects will move into construction, others will quietly move through planning, and a few new concepts will begin to surface. Our focus remains on bringing in experienced operators and businesses that strengthen the areas where people already gather—especially around the lakefront and along our key corridors.

Little Elm has always grown in its own way—steady, thoughtful, and with the community in mind. As we head into spring and summer, we're excited to see the next round of ideas start to take shape.

Jennette Espinosa

Executive Director



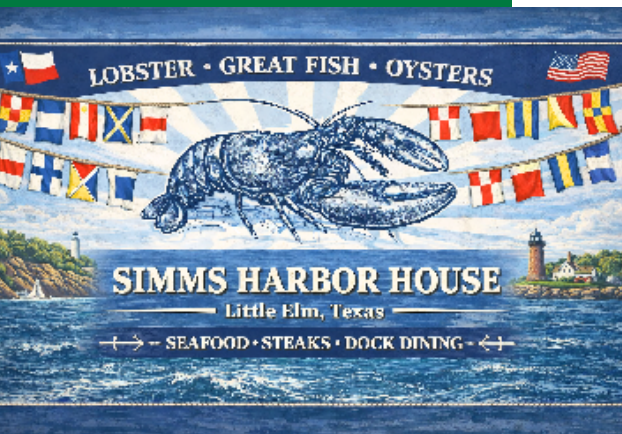


SIMMS HARBOR HOUSE

Arriving 2027

By Simms Hospitality Group

210 E Eldorado Pkwy



Reimagined Dining

Set along the harbor with seamless access to nearby walking trails and dockside views, Simms Harbor House is designed as both a culinary destination and a community gathering space—inviting guests to explore, linger, and return.



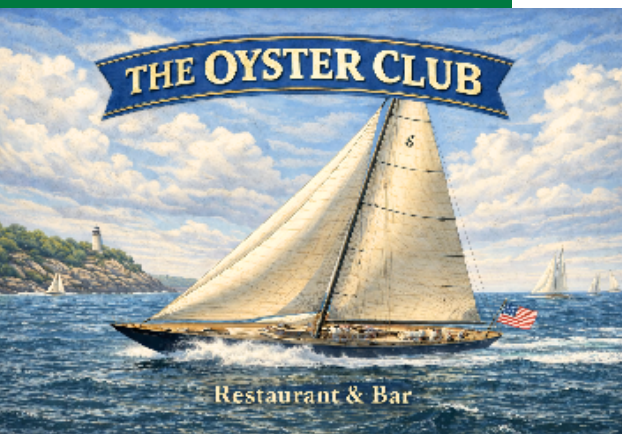
Simms Harbor House

At the heart of the development, Simms Harbor House anchors the experience as a vibrant waterfront restaurant designed to welcome families, locals, and visitors alike. Drawing inspiration from the charm of East Coast seaside towns, the concept brings approachable, high-quality coastal cuisine to the lake—without the premium price point.



Rum Rum Room

Just steps away, the atmosphere shifts as guests enter Rum Rum Room: A Tiki Lounge—an immersive, adults-focused oasis where every detail is designed to transport. Inspired by classic island hideaways, the space blends layered textures, warm lighting, and tropical design elements to create a setting that feels both vibrant and escapist.



The Oyster Club

Framed by expansive waterfront views, the scratch kitchen showcases prime steaks and fresh seafood, delivering a first-class dining experience defined by quality, craftsmanship, and attentive service.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF WHISKEY EXPERIENCE

What started as a hobby collection has grown into something much bigger. Tim Huels, founder of The Whiskey Blendery, began blending whiskey as a way to make something better out of bottles that didn't quite hit the mark. That curiosity turned into a concept built around creativity, but more importantly, around people—creating a place where friends, families, and even strangers can gather and share something together.



Learn more at TheWhiskeyBlendery.com

“It’s impossible to predict what whiskey will taste like when blended with other whiskeys,” says The Blendery owner, Tim Huels. “That’s what makes it so fun, discovering new flavors and creating the best blends.”

At The Blendery, it’s not just about the whiskey. It’s about the experience—gathering together, trying new blends, and enjoying the process. That same spirit carries into their annual Battle of the Blends, where teams come together each summer to create their own custom blends. What makes it stand out isn’t just the competition—it’s the purpose behind it.

Over the past few years, the event has raised more than \$100,000 for local charities, and this year’s proceeds will support Treasured Vessels Foundation, helping survivors of human trafficking rebuild their lives. For Huels, giving back isn’t an add-on—it’s part of the foundation. His strong faith and genuine care for others show up in the way the business operates and the causes it chooses to support.

As The Whiskey Blendery looks toward expanding into Little Elm, that same approach is coming with it—keeping things thoughtful, community-focused, and grounded in something bigger than just business. It’s a place built on connection, with a purpose that goes beyond what’s in the glass.

PARTNERING TOGETHER

Ladera Active Adult Community in Little Elm is honored to be part of a project that recognizes the service and sacrifice of Army Staff Sergeant Edwin Santiago. After more than two decades of military service—including two deployments to Iraq—Staff Sergeant Santiago will be receiving a mortgage-free home in the Ladera Community through Building Homes for Heroes, a program dedicated to supporting wounded veterans and their families.

Santiago joined the Army in 1982, following a long family tradition of military service that dates back to World War II. Throughout his career, he served in both transportation and financial operations and was deployed overseas where he faced dangerous and life-threatening conditions. During a convoy mission in Iraq, an IED explosion left him with lasting head and back injuries. Despite these challenges, he continued to serve and support fellow soldiers, even helping care for wounded veterans as an Army liaison at the Tampa VA.



Like many who have served in combat, Santiago has faced ongoing health challenges related to his service, including PTSD and other medical complications. Programs that provide mortgage-free homes are designed to help veterans like him regain stability and focus on the future. For the Santiago family, this home represents more than a place to live—it provides security, hope, and a foundation for the next chapter of their lives.

Staff Sergeant Santiago's decorated military career reflects his dedication, resilience, and commitment to serving others. As this project moves forward, the community looks forward to welcoming the Santiago family and honoring the service that made this opportunity possible.

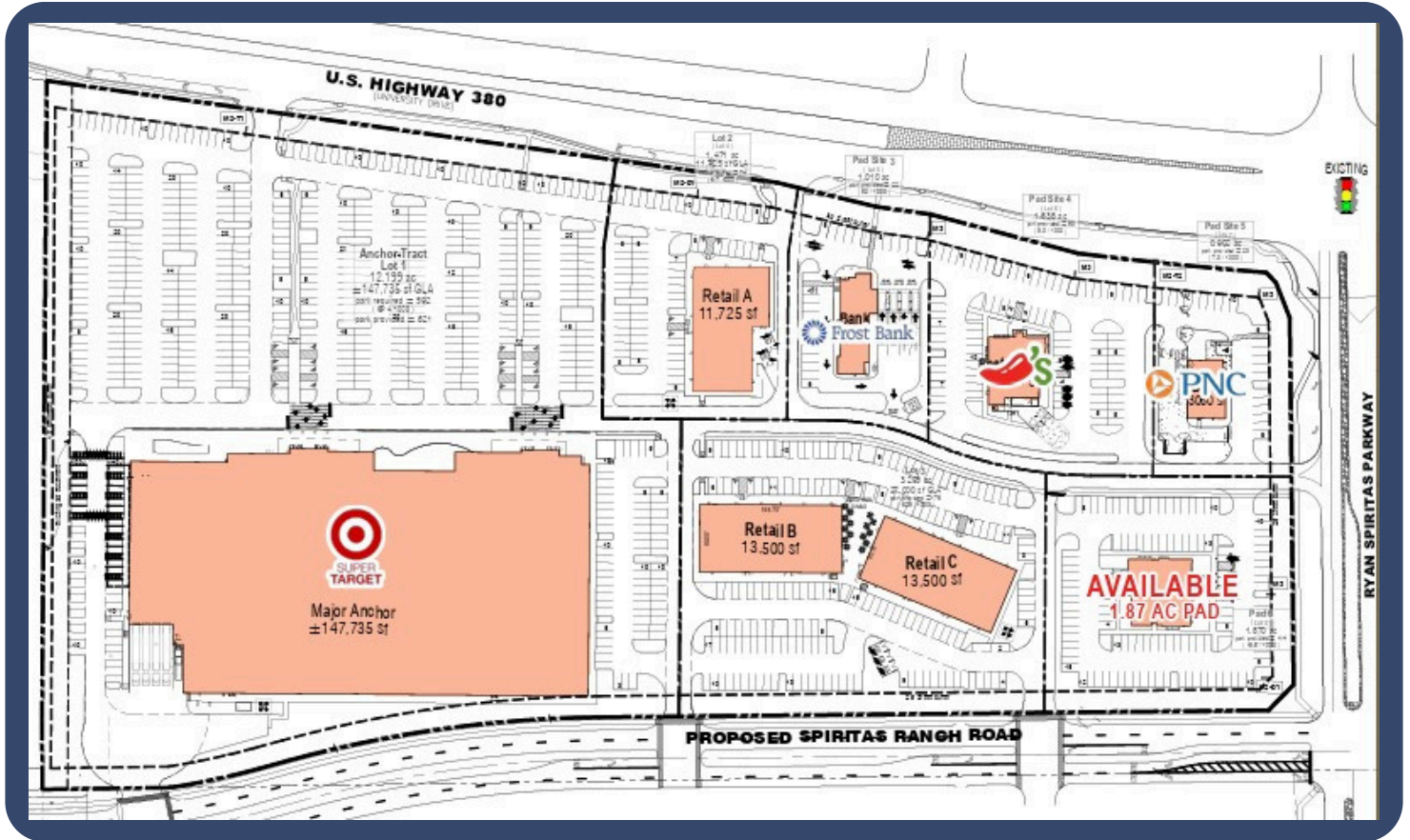
Learn more about how to support them at buildinghomesforheroes.org

Ladera
LITTLE ELM

LADERA LIVING 55+ COMMUNITY

Business Buzz

US 380 & RYAN SPIRITAS PKWY



OTHER CONFIRMED RETAIL

ATI PHYSICAL THERAPY
BREAD WINNER'S CAFE
CHILI'S
COSTA VIDA
FROST BANK
GRAND NAIL SALON
HOWDY ICE CREAM
JAMES AVERY

MO BETTAH'S
OPERATORS FROM LEO'S BRUNCH
HOUSE (2ND LOCATION)
PARIS BAGUETTE
PNC BANK
REFORMED PILATES
VERIZON
VISONWORKS

Business Buzz

US 380 & MAIN STREET



OVERVIEW | KROGER & AZURE PLAZA PHASE 1 & 2

ANCHORED BY THE UPCOMING KROGER MARKETPLACE AND ACROSS FROM THE FUTURE TARGET.

AVAILABLE RETAIL PHASE 1 & 2

- 1600 SF
- 1800 SF
- PHASE 2 - 2867 SF

COMING SOON

- GIDEON MATH & LEARNING

NOW OPEN

- DUMONT ICE CREAM
- THE SMILE SANCTUARY
- THE ONE NAIL BAR
- TOKYO HOUSE

Business Buzz

US 380 & GARDENIA BLVD
TO SAVANNAH BLVD



26912 E UNIVERSITY DR

BLACK SHEEP COFFEE
VERITAS DENTAL & IMPLANTS
VIVO INFUSION



27052 E UNIVERSITY DR

AURA SMILES
BLANC NAIL LOUNGE
BODY20
GOATS ARENA
HUQ UP
JEREMIAH'S ITALIAN ICE
PIZZA TWIST (COMING SOON)



CELEBRATING RECENT PROMOTIONS



Jennifer Eusse

Assistant Director

Jennifer began her journey with the Little Elm Chamber & Economic Development Corporation in 2021—quickly becoming an integral part of our team. Through her leadership, creativity, and strong commitment to collaboration, she has played a key role in advancing projects that strengthen our local economy and enhance the quality of life in Little Elm. As a former business owner herself—Jennifer brings a unique, firsthand perspective to economic development.

JaRee Alli

Operations Manager

Since joining the EDC in 2024, JaRee has played a key role in strengthening day-to-day operations and helping keep projects and initiatives moving forward. She brings a well-rounded perspective to economic development. Her expertise have improved organization, enhanced internal processes, and expanded the EDC's visibility through marketing efforts—contributing to business recruitment and showcasing the growth and opportunities within Little Elm.



STATE & LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS



WASHINGTON, D.C.

Partnerships in Action

The Little Elm EDC, Chamber of Commerce, and elected officials visited Washington, D.C. in April to advocate for our business community, strengthen partnerships, and gain valuable perspective to support Little Elm's continued growth.



Steering

PROGRESS

Certificate of Achievement for Economic Excellence



The Economic Excellence Recognition program provides recognition to economic development organizations that meet a desired threshold of professionalism. Recipients qualify for recognition based on the professional development of their governing board/council as well as the economic development director and professional staff. Certifications, professional memberships and activities, and organizational effectiveness of the economic development staff also contribute to the standards for qualification.

The Little Elm EDC was among eighty-five economic development organizations that received the TEDC's 2025 Economic Excellence Recognition.

