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## **Tradeport sites designated 'market-ready'**

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Tradeport East & West Business Centers in Liberty County have been named Georgia Ready for Accelerated Development sites by Georgia Allies, a public-private partnership focused on economic development marketing.

The GRAD designation indicates that Tradeport East & West are market-ready.

The Liberty County Development Authority announced the designation Friday. "The GRAD designation for Tradeport East & West means that they can truly compete on a global stage for new industry and the accompanying jobs," said Charles R. Gatlin, executive director of Georgia Allies. "I fully believe that Liberty County's efforts to attain the GRAD status for Tradeport East & West will be beneficial."

Tradeport East & West make up Tradeport Business Center, a 5,300-acre mixed-use development that straddles Interstate 95, 30 minutes south of Savannah and 90 minutes north of Jacksonville. The development offers shovel-ready sites with foreign trade zone designation.

Tradeport East already is home to Target's 1.5-million-square-foot regional distribution center and a 242,000-square-foot distribution center for The Tire Rack that is expandable to 500,000 square feet.

Tradeport West offers large rail-served sites.

Atlanta-based Industrial Developments International Inc. has committed to purchase 300 acres in Tradeport East, with an option to take a total of 1,000 acres, according to LCDA officials.

Consistently ranked among the top industrial developers in the country, IDI provides strategically located warehouse and distribution facilities to high-profile tenants, including many Fortune 500 companies.

The developer already has erected a 500,000-square-foot, LEED-certified speculative building in Tradeport East and is currently preparing five building pads ranging in size from 200,000 square feet to

1.3 million square feet in preparation for potential projects in the future.

The company also owns the old Carson Products/L'Oreal building in Crossroads Business Park and has completed a 240,000-square-foot building next door.

Tradeport was the next logical step, said Sean Fitzsimmons, vice president of national business development for IDI.

"Our experience in port markets and other competing sites has shown that Savannah has the shortest drayage of any port," he said.

Drayage is the trucking company freight charge for the pick up or delivery of an ocean container. The shorter the drayage distance, the cheaper the freight cost.

"But, while there would be a little more expense at Tradeport because of the longer distance, we saw a number of factors that outweighed that," he said.

Among them is what Fitzsimmons called "the best tax advantage package around" and the fact that Liberty is one of Georgia's Tier 1 Job Tax Credit counties.

"Tier 1 credits are worth about \$1 million for every 50 jobs created, so that's a real cost-saving advantage," he said.

Add to that the easy access to the rich consumer market in Florida - "You can get to Miami by truck in a day" - and Fitzsimmons says there are lots of reasons Tradeport looks good to shippers.

LCDA's Chief Executive Officer Ronald E. Tolley agrees, adding that the business park's new market-ready status should only increase the draw.

"We are extremely pleased to receive the GRAD designation for both Tradeport East & West," Tolley said.

"With the Georgia Allies promotion of our sites, we believe we will be better poised to market Tradeport East & West to the statewide development community, site consultants and prospects."

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