

Check frequent
coronavirus
updates

Find latest local
information on pandemic

wilcosun.com

THE SUN

Vol. 45 No. 51

GEORGETOWN, TEXAS ■ MAY 17, 2020

One Dollar



Essential
work
continues
during
pandemic

Page 7

Business

The Sunday Sun, May 17, 2020 7

Essential work continues during pandemic

By LISA HELLIER

Novak Brothers has become a familiar name across Georgetown as the company, through its divisions, plays a major role in local development, construction and the real estate sales industry.

The company's name is painted in big, blue letters on its office building in The Summit at Rivery Park, its first major multi-use development, just off I-35, south of Williams Drive. The name is also printed on signs for major construction projects like the Wolf Crossing shopping center at I-35 and East Highway 29. Novak Brothers is connected with the Texas Brownstones row houses in the Rivery and customized homes in Twin Springs Preserve just off Williams Drive.

Jeff Novak put down roots in Georgetown before it became the city of growth and development it is today. He said if you lived here you knew it was coming.

"It was impossible not to see its potential and future as the next growth corridor," he said.

He partnered in different businesses throughout the years, working to create a life for himself outside of the NFL, until he found a path to follow. He played as an offensive lineman for the New York Giants, Miami Dolphins and Jacksonville Jaguars during his 8-year football career.

"I was looking for something that when I got done playing I could come home and make a living at," Mr. Novak said.

It started with real estate and, after a few twists and turns, eventually led to the creation of Novak Brothers in 2010.

Mr. Novak said he first caught the real estate bug in 1993 when he built some spec homes with a fellow NFL player while still playing football. He later developed a security and wiring system company with another partner but said he realized before long the work wasn't fulfilling him the way he wanted.

He transitioned back into real estate on the marketing, sales and technology side. He built Intra Focus Marketing and Advertising with fellow retired NFL player



Jeff Novak of Novak Brothers is at the construction site for Summit Lofts in The Summit at Rivery Park.

Will Furrer, and they established offices in Georgetown, and Jacksonville, Florida. The economic downturn in 2008 led them to step away from the company, each eventually starting their own businesses.

Mr. Novak dived fully back into

the real estate world. He said he took all of the knowledge and experience he gained throughout his life, from football to security to marketing and sales, to develop the Novak Brothers.

"There is no question that every single one of those stops played an

important role in where I am today," he said.

Though it can be tough for him as a developer, he said he loves the work the City of Georgetown does to preserve a certain small-town look and feel. He said it can be frustrating but he knows city

leadership is always trying to work with developers in a way that works for everyone.

He said the city's dedication to letting Georgetown grow while also making sure it's done right with quality projects is why everyone wants to be here and why the city continues to grow.

Mr. Novak said he worked hard to make sure The Summit at Rivery fit the essence of the city and to create a place with businesses where people can have a fun, unique experience.

The development has taken eight years and \$230 million to realize. Construction on the Summit Lofts, the final phase, recently started and will include apartments for rent and retail space wrapped around a parking garage when complete.

Some areas of the Novak Brothers company have been hit harder than others during the COVID-19 pandemic, including hospitality assets. Mr. Novak said hotels have taken a hard hit, struggling with almost 0% occupancy.

Residential home building sales have slowed down but not come to a complete halt. He foresees numbers increasing soon as more businesses open.

Commercial construction, permitted to operate amid the pandemic, has continued but has seen a lull in situations where funding stopped. The development side also faced the same struggle with loans.

Mr. Novak does expect their next big development, the Southern Gateway project on Westinghouse Road, to start moving forward after a 90-day delay because of the virus. The project is a multi-use development with homes, offices and retail, essentially a bigger version of The Summit.

Mr. Novak said he will continue to play the same role he always has in his company and in Georgetown, which is to help grow and put together new opportunities. He is the head coach of his team, and he said it's his job to put the right people in the right situations to make his company a success and create the best projects for the city.