

# Energy Corridor

## Developments Sustain Economic Driver

**T**omball is part of the metropolitan Houston area known as the energy corridor, thanks to being home to many companies operating within the oil and gas industries. One such business is Baker Hughes, which has been a fixture in Tomball since the early 1980s.

But as new businesses look to move into the community to support these fields, space is becoming tight. The Tomball Economic Development Corporation is addressing that issue by establishing the Tomball Business and Technology Park, a 97.5-acre development with flexible lot sizes, convenient access to major roads, light industrial zoning and much more.

The first tenant, Packers Plus Energy Services, broke ground on the primary phase of construction in September 2015. The international company provides goods and services that allow operations in the oil and gas industry to maximize production.

Packers Plus will construct a 237,000-square-foot manufacturing building, a 50,000-square-foot research center and a 40,000-square-foot corporate office on its 17.4-acre campus. The company is projected to create more than 170 jobs over the next five years, and the city is expected to see a \$1.4 million net benefit over the next 10 years.

Education is also playing a big role in Tomball's growth. Ronnie Pickard, executive director of college

relations at Lone Star College–Tomball, points to upstream drilling as an up-and-coming area that will be addressed at the Lone Star College Oil and Gas Training Center.

"We are working to erect a full-scale, live drilling rig for students to have hands-on experience," he says.

Pickard sees training like this as a winning strategy for both the existing and relocating oil service companies. It will bring more job opportunities to a seemingly short-staffed industry.

"We have a drastic need for a skilled workforce," Pickard says. "If a program doesn't train students to get out with a job and experience, then it's no good. It's all about meeting the need and demand to supply the workforce." ★ Mallorie Ann Ingram



Photo courtesy of d&k Photography

In order to make room for more companies to have success, officials broke ground on the Tomball Business and Technology Park along with its first tenant Packers Plus Energy Services.