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IN THE
SPOTLIGHT
LEWISVILLE SELF
STORAGE
Lewisville, Texas

By Rhonda Paschal

QUICK FACTS

Owner/Developer: R. O'Neal Gray/Rearden

Investments Architect: GSBS Architects

Facility Size: 103,000 gross square feet

Site: 4.8 acres

Total Units: 661

Roof: Manufactured Metals Corp I(MMCI)

Doors: Janus International

Hallways/Partitions: Janus International

Security: ADT

Management Software: QuikStor



Before Lewisville Self Storage was erected, the building site was an unattractive, odd-shaped wedge of property situated between a large warehouse and railroad tracks. That changed when developers R. O'Neal Gray and Wayne Ray saw the property's potential and transformed it into a functional, modern, and highly accessible self-storage facility located along heavily traveled Interstate 35 just north of Dallas. In fact, where other prospective developers viewed the land's elevation difference as a major obstacle, Gray and Ray saw it as the perfect location for a split-level construction project.

Head And Shoulders Above

Opened in late 2005, the 103,000-square-foot Lewisville Self Storage facility offers more than 660 units—480 of which are climate-controlled. Units range from 5-by-5 to 12-by-30, located in two buildings on the 4.8-acre parcel. The facility is located in a vibrant area with upscale residential properties, apartment homes, new school facilities, corporate businesses, and retail giants such as The Home Depot® and Lowe's® Home Improvement.

Lewisville Self Storage's neighboring buildings, built-in geographical advantages, and prominent signage make it easy to spot. "The high school is a good landmark, along with the 12-by-35-foot sign in front of the storage facility," explains Ray. "Between our sign, the frontage road, and the high school, you can't miss us." Ray admits that the community's great demographics, its location in an affluent community near Dallas, and its proximity to a neighborhood made up of high-end homes also help the facility stand out.

In an effort to keep the look of Lewisville Self Storage consistent with the overall appearance of the community, a variety of high-quality materials were incorporated into its design. "Because the buildings in this facility are large, we needed an interesting facade," explains Ray. "We used a lot of gables, brick, stone, and stucco to help it blend with the surrounding residential area." The facility's color scheme includes grays, blues, and tones of red, subtly hinting at a patriotic palette. Ray adds, "This facility is head and shoulders above the others in the area."

Built-In Benefits

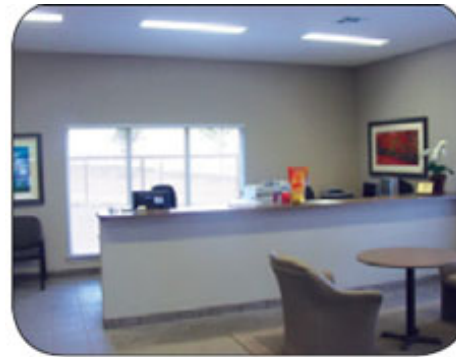
Initially, the layout of the land posed the biggest challenge to this project due to a substantial change in elevation throughout the middle of the property, including a large hill. The developers worked this challenge into the design and came up with a great end product that includes both a single story building that is 410 feet long and 80 feet wide, and a two-story building that is 400 feet long and 80 feet wide.

To overcome the elevation challenges, the two-story building is built into the hill. George Strong, owner and president of Manufactured Metals Corp. I (MMCI), recalls the built-in benefits of Lewisville Self Storage's site. MMCI was responsible for supplying the materials and erecting the facility. "The way the property was laid out, Wayne and O'Neal had only a few options, but it worked out perfect for a split-level building," Strong says.

The bottom floor of the two-story building is about 80 percent underground and is set back into a hillside. With three of the walls made of concrete and surrounded by dirt, and a concrete ceiling and brick front, its construction is very similar to a basement. "This makes for a very controlled year-round temperature with very little mechanical help," Strong says. Another built-in advantage of this building's design has to do with customer accessibility. Strong explains, "With entrances at ground level for both the upper and lower floors, there is no need for elevators or stairs, making the tenants' move-in a lot easier."

While early in the project the presence of the hill may have seemed like a handicap both from a construction and a monetary standpoint, it proved to be an invaluable feature of this project. "The hill is the back wall of the first floor of the two-story building, but it also lends itself to easy access," says Ray. "It was more expensive to build against a hill, but it was worth it in the long run."

With the constant temperature, energy costs are lower, and with no elevators to negotiate, maintenance costs are eliminated. Funds that would have gone



toward the purchase and installation of an elevator were directed elsewhere in the project, paying for attractive architectural elements such as the brick and split-face stone exteriors of both buildings. The second level faces the street and features beautiful, 17-foot high facades above each entry door.



Photos courtesy of Lewisville Self Storage

Secure In Many Ways

The facility's 2,800-square-foot office and apartment is an open and inviting space that boasts a large area for box sales and other moving accessories. The watchful eyes of surveillance cameras are part of the facility's security system, and footage is viewed on flatscreen monitors in the office. In addition to being a well-lighted facility, Lewisville Self Storage also offers security in the form of limited-access entry gates and a separate magnetic lock system in the climate-controlled building.

According to Ray, the facility's three-person on-site management team makes the greatest impact on the overall appearance and security of Lewisville Self Storage. "Our biggest asset is the management team that takes great pride in the property," he says. "They care about the customers and they know who comes and goes at the facility." The forces behind Lewisville Self Storage have provided security for the company in more ways than one. The developers are taking the necessary steps to secure future successes with the acquisition of additional properties in the Lewisville area. The Lewisville site is a prototype for six other sites throughout Dallas. "This is our first project where we put an emphasis on the architectural aspects of the facility," says Ray.

Strong has urged Ray to take advantage of the basement-like space by converting part of the bottom level to some type of specialized storage. Ray is certainly considering the options. "With the built-in benefit of cool temperature stability," Ray says, "we've had some interest in wine storage in the two-story building." The owners are now conducting feasibility studies on this specialty use.

Strong says he is certain that good things lie ahead for the facility. "At the rate they are renting units and with as much construction that is going on in the area," he says, "the future looks good."



Rhonda Paschal is a freelance writer based in Phoenix, Arizona. She is also the editor of the *Arizona Administrative Register*, and a regular contributor to the [Mini-Storage Messenger](#).

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