

## Land lies 'in the path of progress'

Developer says Deltona better for deal than county

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DELTONA -- Recent controversy over large-scale annexations in Volusia County doesn't worry Daryl Carter. He's got 3,000 rural acres in Osteen he wants to bring into the city.

"We're long-term thinkers," said Carter, president of Maury L. Carter and Associates of Orlando. "We're willing to invest the money, time and energy necessary to put the right project on that property."

The Carter family, which developed many of the businesses on Saxon Boulevard and Interstate 4 in Orange City, recently purchased 12 parcels of land at State Road 415 and Maytown Road for nearly \$12 million.

Carter said there is no immediate plan to develop the property, but he sees it as a perfect area for a future mixed-use residential and commercial project.

"When you look at Central Florida from 30,000 feet up, you see this area is in the path of progress," he said. "It becomes obvious this is one of the last developable areas."

This week's annexation request came because Carter thinks he will have an easier time working with Deltona than with the county.

"We have a good working relationship (with the city)," he said, "And I think they're more open to development. We're better off with them."

While Carter expects opposition, mostly from environmentalists and slow-growth proponents, he said it is nothing his firm hasn't overcome before.

"We have a long history of success of getting along with neighbors. Maybe not 100 percent, no, but by and large, we do."

Carter said his company has donated more than 50,000 acres statewide for conservation. But local environmentalists say past good deeds won't change their opinion of this project.

"Whenever they develop a large piece of land like that, there's going to be destruction," said Sierra Club member Betty O'Laughlin. "They can't get the end product they want without it."

The property is not adjacent to city limits, but Bob Nix, Deltona's director of Development Services, said owners of property that joins the city and the Carter property also have applied for annexation. Nix said he's unsure if there will be opposition to the annexation: "I don't know what to expect anymore. It's hard to tell how people are going to react."

Neither request has been scheduled to come before city commissioners, Nix said.

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