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50 cents

Odessa's Family Dollar begins staffing

By Bob Campbell
Odessa American

The first Family Dollar Distribution Center employees reported for work this week as the company prepares to start receiving merchandise June 2 and shipping to an initial 350 stores in three states July 21.

Training Managers Jim Russell and Deborah Vermillion held classes Monday and Tuesday at MCM Elegante Hotel for 20 new employees.

Russell, based at the corporation's Duncan, Okla., distribution center, and Vermillion, who recently moved to Odessa, said 450 to 500

employees will be added in "hiring waves" every two weeks from Monday through June and July into August, when the company should reach full strength, they said.

Most prospective employees have not yet been notified they'll be offered a job, the training managers said. The next hiring date is May 19, around the time the first employees go to work at the center. Officially on the payroll when their training begins, they will work three shifts 5 1/2 days a week at the center.

Russell and Vermillion said the company has identi-

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PAUL ZOELLER/ODESSA AMERICAN

As crews finish the new Family Dollar distribution center on Tuesday, some employees were already at work undergoing training at the MCM Elegante. The center will have 450 to 500 employees who will start work in 'hiring waves' two weeks apart, reaching full strength in August.

Dollar stores have boom in tough economic times

From Staff and Wire Reports

PEORIA, Ill. — In these days of penny pinching, "dollar stores" are flourishing, offering consumers more bang for their buck.

With the sluggish economy and consumer confidence scraping the barrel, retail chains that sell items for \$1 or less increasingly are drawing consumers by the millions in search of good deals. In fact, North Carolina-based Family

Dollar is riding the sudden wave of demand for deeply discounted merchandise, building a sprawling distribution center in Odessa to allow it to expand into new markets in the western United States.

About 56 million U.S. households patronized a dollar store last year, visiting 11 times on average, which is up 3 million from the previous year, according to a study by

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GYMNASTICS TRAINING



James Naylor
SUSPECT



June Naylor
DECEASED

STAFFING

From 1A

fied most of the people it wants but has not contacted them.

Hiring dates after May 19 will be June 2, June 16, June 30, July 8, July 22 and Aug. 4.

Tuesday was a big day for the Odessa operation, formally known as the Family Dollar Services Texas Distribution Center, or "DC."

Hensel Phelps Construction of Greeley, Colo., general contractor for the \$50-million construction project that began last September, held its monthly owner's meeting Tuesday morning for Family Dollar executives who had flown in from Charlotte, N.C., headquarters.

They were Charlie Gibson, senior vice president for distribution; Rick Fox, manager of industrial engineering; Bob Jackson, director of distribution, construction and maintenance; and Michael Randall and Kiley Green of Randall-Paulson Architects of Roswell, Ga.

Awaiting city fire inspectors' clearance, the center was not available for training classes.

The Odessa distribution center is the only Family Dollar facility of its kind in the state and the seventh in the nation. Family Dollar operates more than 4,700 stores.

Regional Vice President and General Manager Owen Humphrey moved here in January from Duncan, where he held the same job.

He said Tuesday afternoon that the Odessa DC will start with 350 stores in West Texas, New Mexico and Arizona and take on 75 more toward East Texas in August, easing pressure on the DCs in Duncan and West Memphis, Ark.

Humphrey said Odessa will eventually expand its service area to 750 to 800 stores "in all the western states," including Utah, Colorado and Nevada, East Texas and the Rio Grande Valley, where Family Dollar is entrenched.

"There's never a dull moment," he said. "The new DCs here and in Duncan are great state of the art systems with conveyors, paperless

receiving and computerized fork lifts, all radio frequency-driven."

Humphrey said the new DCs use Catalyst software made in Milwaukee, Wis.

"We're going to provide efficient and cost-effective service to our stores in a very accurate and productive manner," he said. "We're opening 10 stores a week, a lot of them in our service area."

Transportation Vice President Jim Burns of Charlotte said the firm is building 575 stores this fiscal year and will open a number of new ones north and west of Odessa, which usually happens around a new distribution center.

Jackson, the construction director who has supervised the Odessa project at 3101 E. I-20, said Tuesday that Family Dollar is planning its eighth DC but hasn't settled on a location. "I think we'll be breaking ground this fall some place," he said. "We're looking at the Southeast and Northeast."

Others are in Matthews, N.C., Front Royal, Va., Maquoketa, Iowa and Morehead, Ky.

Project Supt. Al Heustis said the 900,000-square-foot building at Interstate 20 and JBS Parkway Boulevard — five football fields wide across the front with 20 acres under one roof — is the first DC with evaporative air conditioners, or "swamp coolers," owing to the Permian Basin's dry climate.

There are 109 swamp coolers on the roof to keep the employees and merchandise cool.

A number of area trucking companies will carry in partial loads of merchandise from Dallas, Houston El Paso and other receiving points, but two have just won contracts for full load in-bound service — Roadway Express of 105 S. Grandview Ave. and G&RG Trucking of 800 S. Meadow Ave.

Other in-bound full load haulers will be Swift Transportation of Phoenix, Covenant Transport of Chattanooga, Tenn., Schneider National Co. of Green Bay, Wis., and the two that will also carry all out-bound merchandise: J.B. Hunt Co. of Lowell, Ark., and Werner Enterprises of Omaha, Neb.

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Information Resources Inc.

"Dollar stores are a great destination for many people

pers come from mostly low to middle incomes, the stores are seeing an increasing variety of consumers.

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