

Andrew Choy

Developer strives for excellence

By Gary Hanlon

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D-Y-N-A-M-I-C!

If you were looking for one word to describe Missouri City businessman Andrew Choy, dynamic would be the best word. Choy, who is the president and chief executive officer of Lake Olympia Development Corporation, is indeed forceful, energetic and powerful.

"We would like to see Lake Olympia become the biggest and best development in this area," said Choy. "The project has a long way to go. Right now we are only about 30 percent developed."

Lake Olympia is located on Highway 6 in Missouri City and the 750-acre develop includes 122 acres of lakes.

A graduate of the University of Houston with a degree in business administration-majoring in accounting, Choy came to the Houston area in 1969. He started his first business shortly after graduation and moved into the development industry in 1978. His first projects were in the Alief and Mission Bend areas.

"I personally like the Southwest Houston and Fort Bend County areas," Choy explained of his decision to start the Lake Olympia project. "We were looking for some place to start a major development and we found this area."

Finding the project site and eventually obtaining the land were the first major obstacles for Choy to overcome. "We started studying the project in 1981," he explained. "The site was not visible from Highway 6, we discovered the lakes by looking at aerial photographs of the area."

"Once we found the site, we had to convince the owners to sell the land," Choy added. "The land had been in the same family for more than 140 years and they were not eager to sell, but finally we convinced them."

The long hours and hard work have

paid off, according to Choy.

"First Colony and Quail Valley are the two biggest developments in this area and they are about 90 percent built out," he stated. "Eventually somebody else in this area will have to take over and we think we have the kind of development people are looking for."

"We would like to be the biggest developer in this area for the next 10 to 20 years," Choy added. "We would like to even expand the project beyond this site. There is enough land around us to expand."

"The best developments take the longest to establish," he stated. "Our turn will come."

"Right now the most important thing we can do is maintain the image of a quality development, with quality builders," Choy said.

Anybody who is familiar with the Missouri City Balloon Festival the past two years knows Choy's demand for excellence goes beyond his daily business life.

For three months this year, the daily operations at Lake Olympia were virtually put on hold as the corporation's

staff worked full-time on the balloon festival.

"I believe if you are going to do something you should do it right the first time," he explained. "Communications are very important in this business and everyday life."

"I listen to both sides — an argument before I take side or make a decision. I believe that things will work out if you listen to both sides."

"A willingness to work together makes the project operate smoothly. Whether that project is land development or something like the balloon festival."

Choy, who is relatively secretive about his personal life, said he learned a lot about the building/development industry from his father David Tsai, who developed dozens of high rise buildings in Hong Kong. Tsai is retired now, but keeps a watchful eye on his son's project.

"We have one advantage over other developers," explained Choy. "We owe very little money compared to the size of the project. We borrowed very little money, we used our own money."



Andy Choy (left) presented Mike McAfee, of Budweiser, with a plaque during awards ceremonies at this year's Missouri City Balloon Festival. Choy was chairman of this year's festival which was held at Lake Olympia.