

June, 2006

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

STORAGE EXPRESS

Palmdale, California

By Rhonda Paschal



Undoubtedly, the best use of land and space is crucial to a successful self-storage project. The developers of Storage Express in Palmdale, Calif., snagged the ideal property and built a facility that has proven to be spotlight worthy. With nearly 100,000 square feet of rentable space, Storage Express Palmdale opened in March 2005 and has been turning heads ever since. Of course, the facility's high visibility from the only freeway in town makes it easy to spot for passersby.

In Good Company

Storage Express backs up to the Antelope Valley 14 Freeway and is situated on five acres. The facility is located in a predominantly residential community that is also home to the types of hotels and gas stations often found near major freeways. While common, these off-the-freeway businesses, according to Storage Express Regional Manager Nicole Gray, come with an important benefit. "These types of businesses bring a lot of traffic to the area."

Already in good company with neighboring businesses, Storage Express is located in a community that will be home to a new development—the Challenger Business Park—next year. The business park project will be comprised of six buildings and 100,000 square feet that will house a variety of businesses as well as medical offices. A 102-room Country Inn Suites hotel is also in the plan for the area while a tire distributor will occupy a highly visible corner of the business park property.



Photos courtesy of Storage Express

QUICK FACTS

Developer: Storage Express
Palmdale, LLC

Architect: Valli Architectural Group

Facility Size:
99,876 Rentable Square Feet

Total Number of Units: 638 units

Doors: DBCi

Roof: East Bay Construction

Security: PTI Integrated Systems

Management and Related Software:
SiteLink by SMD Software, Inc.

Realizing the potential benefit of future development in the area, Gray knows that the surrounding businesses bring in traffic that will help the facility through lease-up. She adds, "The new business park will also add a higher level of appearance to the area. The medical office will be of great use when the 250-bed hospital that will be located less than one mile from the facility is completed in 2007."

In the meantime, Storage Express Palmdale customers have access to 425 storage units ranging in size from 5-by-5 to 10-by-30, 91 air conditioned spaces, and 122 RV spaces. The facility's security system includes individual door alarms, computerized access, digital surveillance, double key pads—one at passenger car height and one at large truck and RV height—mounted in steel bollards, and features a pinhole-size security camera.

One of Storage Express Palmdale's most impressive features is its spacious office retail area that comprises nearly 2,000 square feet. Referred to as the Storage Express store, the office provides a complete selection of full-scale model storage rooms that represent the units available for rent at the facility. Each model is set up to function as a moving equipment display. Additionally, Storage Express rental units are equipped with 10-foot-wide doors and 10-foot-wide interior hallways.

Neighborhood Revival

Although some of the established businesses in the area are older, Storage Express Palmdale offers a fresh look and feel to the community that residents appreciate. "With our new state-of-the-art facility, we have started a revival of the area that homeowners nearby are thankful for," Gray says.

Residents enjoy the obvious benefits Storage Express brings to their neighborhood but the facility also fulfills another important need. "While surveying the area for the site, we realized the need for RV-type storage in our area," explains Gray. That's because city ordinances in nearby neighborhoods prohibit RV parking on streets and in some cases driveways. The facility has experienced great success with its RV storage, which features 18-foot-high indoor RV units. As a result, the company is expanding its facility in nearby Lancaster to include nearly 100 RV spaces.

The Palmdale facility's tall exterior walls are multi-functional, serving as an added layer of security around its perimeter while also housing its larger storage units. "Using the tall exterior buildings as perimeter walls for the facility was the best plan to utilize the lot we have," says Gray. This option also gave the facility the necessary height without sacrificing the number of units needed to make it a profitable center.

Although the exterior walls were beneficial to the overall design of the facility, they also posed a unique challenge to the homeowners situated behind the site. Obviously, they were not thrilled at the idea of staring at a brick wall. "We solved this [problem] very quickly with a local meeting during which we addressed all the homeowners' concerns," recalls Gray. The view was greatly enhanced with the addition of extensive landscaping and tall shade trees along the perimeter walls. Gray adds, "Now, homeowners stop in the office to thank us for joining the neighborhood. They say we have brightened and added a sense of security to the community."

A Strong Competitor

With 10 competitors located within five miles—six of which are within two miles—Storage Express has the goods to be a strong competitor. According to Gray, "Most of the competitors' sites are older than ours and are not equipped with the security features and customer service we offer."

While admitting that one of its biggest competitors in the area is well-known in the industry and is also located near a freeway, Gray knows Storage Express can hold its own. "I think our cleanliness and security really sets us apart from our competitors," she says. "We are also the only [facility] that offers climate-controlled spaces." This is particularly important in desert climates where extreme temperature changes can wreak havoc on many stored items. Also giving Storage Express Palmdale a competitive edge is the fact that it is one of the few locations in town that offers RV storage.

The facility's overall appearance, which includes mason, stucco, and tiled exterior walls, is very complimentary to the neighborhood as is the drought resistant and colorful landscaping, all of which help to make



Photos courtesy of Storage Express

it an inviting place for customers who are often in transition in their lives. Customers' storage and moving concerns are eased by Storage Express Palmdale's convenient freeway location, high quality security system, extra wide doors, clean and well-lit isles, and large retail office area. "We have also received several compliments on the level of customer service we offer here, which is something we pride ourselves on," adds Gray.



Rhonda Paschal is a freelance writer based in Phoenix, Arizona, and is a regular contributor to *Mini-Storage Messenger*. She is also editor of the *Arizona Administration Register*.