



## Third tech company eyeing GB expansion

AppRiver, Avalex would welcome tenant in Quietwater building

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The Quietwater Business expansion proposed to accommodate tech firms AppRiver and possibly Avalex Technologies is not yet approved, but a third, new company already is interested in securing office space in the planned four-story building.

TEAM Santa Rosa confirmed that a tech company that develops software for government agencies is poised to move to Gulf Breeze if the expansion project moves forward. Fifty employees would be relocated to the Gulf Breeze site, with 10-15 additional hires over the next 3-5 years.

In accordance with state guidelines for the tax credits offered the firms, the average wage of the company's industry is \$43,000 per year.

AppRiver anticipates building an 80,000-square-foot building of Class-A office space worth more than \$12 million. The proposed building would require a height variance to allow construction of the building to a height of 58-60 feet, but the project has been wellreceived within the community.

At the Public Hearing and Development and Review Board (DRB) workshop held Aug. 25, the majority of comments were positive. The DRB unanimously approved the height variance request at a special meeting on Tuesday; current height maximum for C-1 Zoning is 35 feet. The Gulf Breeze City Council will meet Tuesday, Sept. 8 at 6:30 p.m. to hear the DRB recommendations and vote on the variance.

According to City Manager Edwin "Buz" Eddy, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has confirmed receipt of the city's request to use surplus right-of-way along U.S. Highway 98. Eddy said the city request is being processed and an answer could come by the end of this week. The right-of-way adjoins property owned by the developers that would be donated to the city for the purpose of building a municipal garage. Funds from the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) would be used to fund a municipal garage, an elevated walkover to the Andrews Institute and proposed upgrades to the 911 Memorial Park.

"Once approval is received from all necessary parties, we will move forward," said ? Michae l Murdoch , CEO, AppRiver. "This project will spark unsurpassed growth and generate many new, high-quality professional jobs for the area."

AppRiver's Current Annual Impact nets the area an annual wage impact of \$11.5 million, as a result of 100 direct jobs, 33 indirect and 133 total induced jobs, according to the University of West Florida Haas Center. Indirect and induced jobs are those jobs created when the employees spend their dollars and impact the area.

Avalex Technologies of Pensacola, the leading national supplier of flat-panel displays, digital mapping systems, digital video recorders and sensorpointing systems for both the airborne surveillance and military markets, is also being courted. Avalex would be relocating to Gulf Breeze from Pensacola with 51 existing positions, and creating 46 new positions over the next three years. 30 percent of their employees are in engineering, 25 percent are technicians, 25 percent in production, and 20 percent are administrative or clerical.

As part of state-wide job retention and creation efforts, AppRiver and Avalex could be eligible for state and local grants for the expansion project, quickaction closing funds and qualified Target Industry Refunds. Murdoch sees a huge benefit to the area with the retention of existing 100-plus positions and the creation of 80 new positions over the next three years.

The makeup of the AppRiver team is 60 percent technical support and 15 percent developers. Sales make up 15 percent, and billing and administration 10 percent.

The average wage of both firms is \$46,016, exceeding the county average by 150 percent.