



Pete Dwyer, founder of Dwyer Realty Cos., developed his interest in real estate from his father.

NICK SIMONITE | ABJ

## LOOKING TO THE EAST

Pete Dwyer's vision has greatly impacted development east of Austin

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Pete Dwyer has managed to align two things he loves dearly in this world: his family and his work.

The 54-year-old founder of Dwyer Realty Cos. has involved his four children in his development business throughout their lives, taking them to sites, teaching them about sustainability of the land and laying down fire rings for a barbecue in the process, said Danny Burnett, Dwyer's development coordinator.

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**Gary Farmer**  
Longtime friend of Pete Dwyer

every minute of it. With his footprints throughout the region, one of Dwyer's most significant accomplishments has been east of Austin. He was instrumental in the emergence of infrastructure to the east and his WildHorse Ranch project, which may be seeing rejuvenation in the near future.

The idea of developing the east was born out of conflict, Dwyer said. After a bitter battle with the city over land use at Parkstone, he later turned his sights to the east, where he proved to be instrumental in the region's infrastructure.

"He went through the environmental wars," said David Armbrust, a partner in the law firm Armbrust & Brown LLP. "And he learned his lesson. The community didn't want it to go west; it wanted to go east."

But Dwyer will tell you his most significant accomplishments are his children, who range in age from 3 to 18. And he's always ready to pull out photos and give updates on their accomplishments.

"He pulls out a picture, tells you who's who. He's very focused and committed to those children," said Gary Farmer, president of Heritage Title Co. of Austin Inc.

Dwyer's penchant for combining his loves of family and land is a reflection of his father, a doctor who was involved in real estate. Dwyer fell in love with real estate and development as the father took his son to projects he was working on. Dwyer was fascinated with those broken down old

houses and the possibilities in store for the land they were on.

Dwyer's real estate career began when he was in his second year in college. He put the down payment on a triplex on Bee Cave Road by selling a boat he had bought with money he had earned at a Taco Bell on Oltorf Street. Beginning at 14 — he lied about his age — "I was the fastest taco shell fryer in the city," he said.

Today, "My hobby is my profession," he said. "I've always worked for myself and loved what I've done." Farmer described his long-time friend as "the doer of good deals."

"I've known him for at least 20 years. If you're in the title insurance business, you want to know Pete Dwyer," Farmer said. "He's a strategic thinker, always thinking three or four steps down the road. But he doesn't mind rolling his sleeves up, getting his hands dirty and getting the job done."

Dwyer is particularly proud of his 1996 collaboration with the Home Builders Association to create the nation's first All-Green Builders Parade of Homes at Parkstone, in West Austin. Other examples of

environmental sustainability include the promotion of an Austin-to-Manor, Manor-to-Houston regional hike-and-bike trail and a 200-acre preserve in ShadowGlen Residential.

Startup GridEagle Energy, which operates the Universal SolarWind Power Catalog, is Dwyer's latest project. It will focus on alternative energy products and renewable energy consulting.

Burnett said Dwyer's biggest work-related achievement has been sustainability — remaining viable in the market and being a good steward of the land.

"We don't do the largest volume; we don't have the biggest sales," Burnett said. "We do more than development. We create communities. Pete is the visionary on that. He is the guy operating at 35,000 feet and looking down at the land and looking at how it needs to grow."

Burnett said a new focus for Dwyer's company is rethinking uses of land, with growing crops and the use of trails in developments.

"There are other ways to have green space than golf courses," Burnett said.

"He's the energizer bunny," said Armbrust, who has done work for Dwyer for about 15 years. "He doesn't give up on things easily. Real estate tends to go where everyone else is going. ... [But] you have to have confidence that the market will follow you."

