

SMART MOVES

Back in the saddle

As Daybreak Venture remodels 74 communities across the Lone Star State the firm is being sensitive to local communities, as four recent efforts show

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Aging physical facilities are a widespread challenge facing long-term care operators today. Each **SMART MOVES** installment offers a variety of ways to transform your community, while also improving your residents' quality of life.



Daybreak Ventures is making a concerted effort to make its facilities look and feel more comfortable for residents.

Instead of riding off into the sunset, Daybreak Venture has used major redesigns to get back in the saddle. And after completing four of its most prominent renovations recently, the company is again riding high.

President Mike Rich says the complete makeovers on four facilities in western Texas towns of Midland, Levelland and

Odessa are symbolic of Daybreak's resurgence in the Lone Star State, just two years after narrowly avoiding bankruptcy. In Rich's view, the firm's financial troubles were directly linked to the condition of its facilities. Some of the buildings had fallen into disrepair and were in dire need of major upgrades.

"The only way to get back where we needed to be was to

rebrand the company and focus on culture change," he said. "Our strategy was to come in and say, 'We have to change,' but we had to search for ways to actually do that."

One of Daybreak's landlords of Kading/Yellin, Jackie Yellin proved very helpful in that effort, providing guidance to get the redesign process going full steam. She also was a main contributor to the creative flair and provided sound design philosophy.

"I believe that to be desirable in the community, you need to institute a culture change including a complete redesign that reflects the community you're in," she said. "You want to attract a sophisticated client base and in order to do that you need to have a nice building."

Yellin assisted with the Odessa, Levelland, and Midland projects by attending monthly meetings. She admits that design is "her hobby, not a profession," but given her familiarity with the skilled nursing business and the region, she had some substantive ideas about how to make the facilities more appealing.

"It comes down to making a nursing home comfortable – not just for Mom and Dad, but for their families so they will want to go there," Yellin said. "If it feels too institutional, they won't feel comfortable."

Wholesale changes

Once the rebranding initiative gained traction and the necessary funding fell into place, Rich

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looked north to Stevens Point, WI, home of Joerns Healthcare, for help in executing the ambitious project.

"I wanted this to be a significant change—not just wallpaper, paint and lipstick," Rich said. "We needed a design team that could help us get to the next 10 to 15 years and be ready for the boomers."

With 74 facilities across Texas, Daybreak is the largest operator in the state and 13th largest provider in the United States. The firm's master plan is to improve all the properties in the chain within five to seven years. So far, eight have been completely redone.

The four most recent facilities to have gotten a new identity are Lynwood in Levelland, Terrace West in Midland and The Deerings and Sienna in Odessa. Each town is located in the same general area. But each setting has different characteristics and those distinctions are reflected in the buildings' new décor. Instrumental in creating the individual styles of each facility is Colleen Simpson, Daybreak director of marketing, who asserts that marketing is an important facet of design decisions.

"It comes into play because you want to create a home-like setting people want to come into," she said.

Simpson saw her mission as "figuring out each area" and developing relevant themes. Because Odessa is more rural and situated in ranch country, The Deerings' décor has a country-western flavor, featuring Texas stars, cowboys and horses. Midland is among the oil fields and has a more modern, cosmopolitan feel.

Joerns recommended furnishings that fit the themes' aesthetics while also providing the dimensions and functionality necessary for a long-term care



Joerns recommendations let Daybreak Ventures present style and functionality.

"I wanted this to be a significant change."

Mike Rich, Daybreak Ventures President

environment. Joerns Hi/Lo beds get closer to the floor to minimize the impact of a resident's fall, Crypton fabrics are stain-resistant and easy to clean, dining room furnishings are easy to fold and move and lobby chairs are low and supportive.

The Joerns difference

With an ongoing commitment to renovating its properties and multiple projects often running concurrently, Daybreak relies heavily on Joerns to handle the numerous details related to coordinating the design elements and equipping the facilities.

Senior Interior Designer Terri Prokop worked closely with Daybreak to develop design standards that allowed each owner or facility to select the unique look that they prefer.

"Each of their facilities were able to use color schemes from the design standards selected

which ultimately helps them maintain consistencies and assists with cost efficiencies as well."

Mark Kuban, Joerns' account executive based in Dallas, became a fixture in west Texas and explains how the company serves as the "one-stop" source for the client.

"We handle it all—design, manufacturing, servicing, staging and installation," he said. "When you remodel a facility, there are a lot of products coming in from many different suppliers and you have to keep on top of it. This can be a see-saw process, so you have to adapt to the changing environment."

Kuban worked closely with Simpson to bring hundreds of products onto each site. Having Joerns handle the installation ensured that sophisticated equipment like Joerns bed systems were assembled properly.

"Our installation capabilities are a branch of the company that is very important," Kuban said. "When you outsource that process, you lose control. With healthcare beds there are certain things that need to be right, such as proper placement of headboards and footboards...it has to work together as a system."

Because Joerns designs, manufactures and services all their products, they can stage large scale projects from a variety of locations all while providing consistent and complete service to their customers.

"We put it all together and ship it straight to the customer," Kuban said.

Rich says the design team "knocked it out of the park" when it came to identifying the special qualities of each community and that decorative changes like burnt orange tones and wood grain finishes have really helped The Deerings to succeed.

"It is booming," he said. "It was a middle of the road building and it is now our number one property, with 95% occupancy."

At Terrace West, Simpson says she got the ultimate compliment that made all her efforts worthwhile.

"I was completing some of the finishing touches, making sure the bedspreads were right when a woman resident asked if I was the one responsible for the design," she said. "When I said I was, the woman said, 'Thank you. I now feel like I am at home.' That was the icing on the cake." ■

Coming next month

SMART MOVES will examine ways to improve design by integrating technology.

