



Home Depot opens

*Business competition increases in **Apple Valley***

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APPLE VALLEY — Big business is booming in town and it's evident "competition is good" now that Home Depot near **Apple Valley** and Bear **Valley** roads, is officially open.

The big box home improvement store is only a stone's throw away from its No. 1 competitor, Lowe's, and residents who were playing reporter asked employees if they were worried that business might dwindle?

"I asked them over there what they thought and they said 'if we don't have it then we will tell them to try and get it across the street,'" said Garth Arnett of Hesperia.

Store manager Sam Baghdadlian said Home Depot's strategy is to look at the amount of growth in the area and the amount of houses being built.

"I realized we need another home-improvement store," he said. "I have the utmost respect for our competitor."

Smaller competitors around the **Valley** used to worry about being run out of business by the big box stores. Today, they're amused by the amount of the stores on every corner.

"At one time we were the king of the hill, now we are not even a household name," laughed Phillip Stein, chief executive officer of H & E Do-It-Yourself Center. "There are so many of them already what difference does it make?"

Since 1973, Stein has focused on his customers and prices. He said he stays in business because he pays attention.

"We can react to the changes like when it gets cold, we are prepared for that," he said. "We're not any better or any worse, we are just different and we know what sells."

However, bringing more retail to the town is key. Generating sales tax will provide revenue for much needed public and safety services.

Councilman Scott Nassif said the store will also attract residents from neighboring cities and alleviate traffic on the already over-congested Bear **Valley** Road.

"This is great. There is definitely some momentum happening here," Nassif said. "We're going to see people from Hesperia and Victorville shopping in **Apple Valley**."