

Businesses flock to new and improved Burbank

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executive of the firm, said that while the rest of the state's energy costs have surged, the three Los Angeles County municipally owned utilities have kept companies sheltered, free from rolling black-outs and astronomical rates.

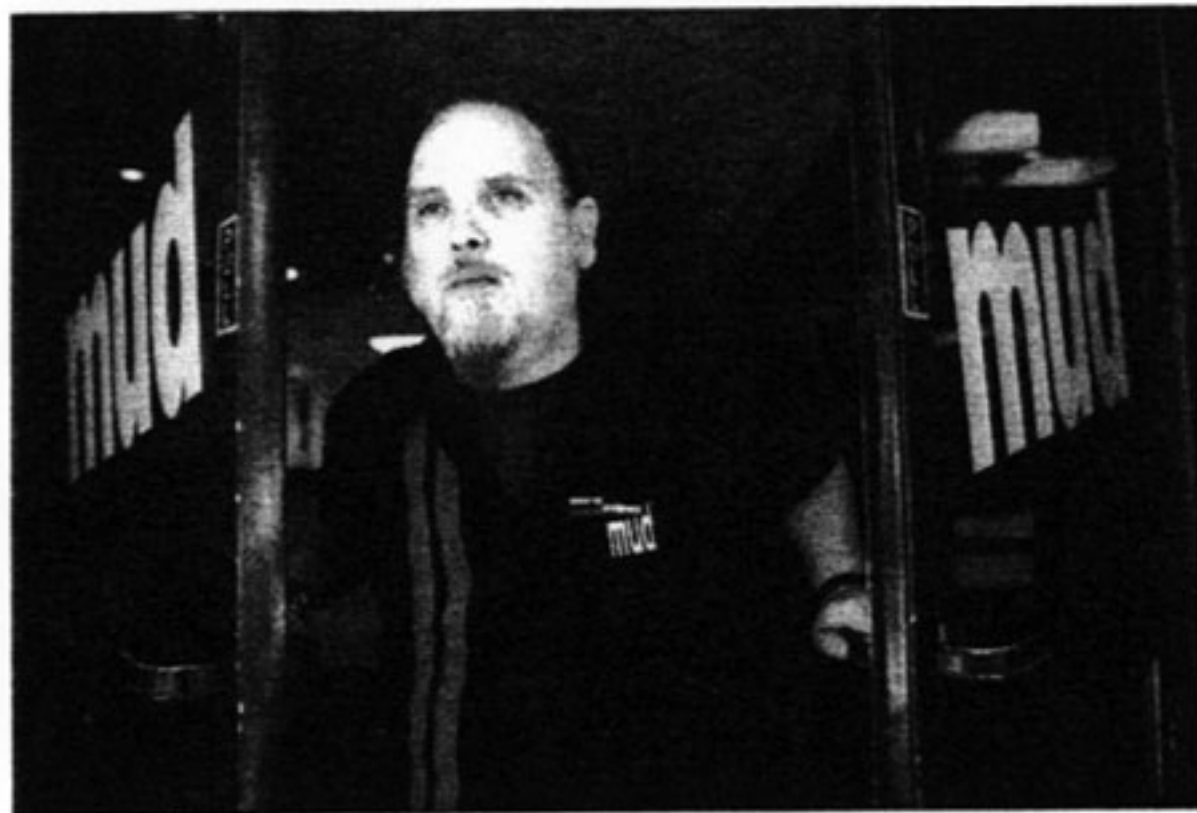
"There are going to be a lot of companies, especially medium and little ones, that have really gotten hurt by utility costs," Kosmont said. "They're going to want to be in L.A., so you'll see an increase in interest."

There already has been quite a bit of interest in the area, boasting approximately 9,000 firms, according to the city's Community Development Center. It's already home to major tenants like The Walt Disney Co., Warner Bros. and NBC.

A massive \$200 million development near the airport, the Empire Center, is under way, boasting high-profile tenants like Target and Kripsy Kreme. Built atop land once used by Lockheed, whose departure in the mid-1980s cost the city 20,000 jobs, the center is hotly anticipated as a shopping destination.

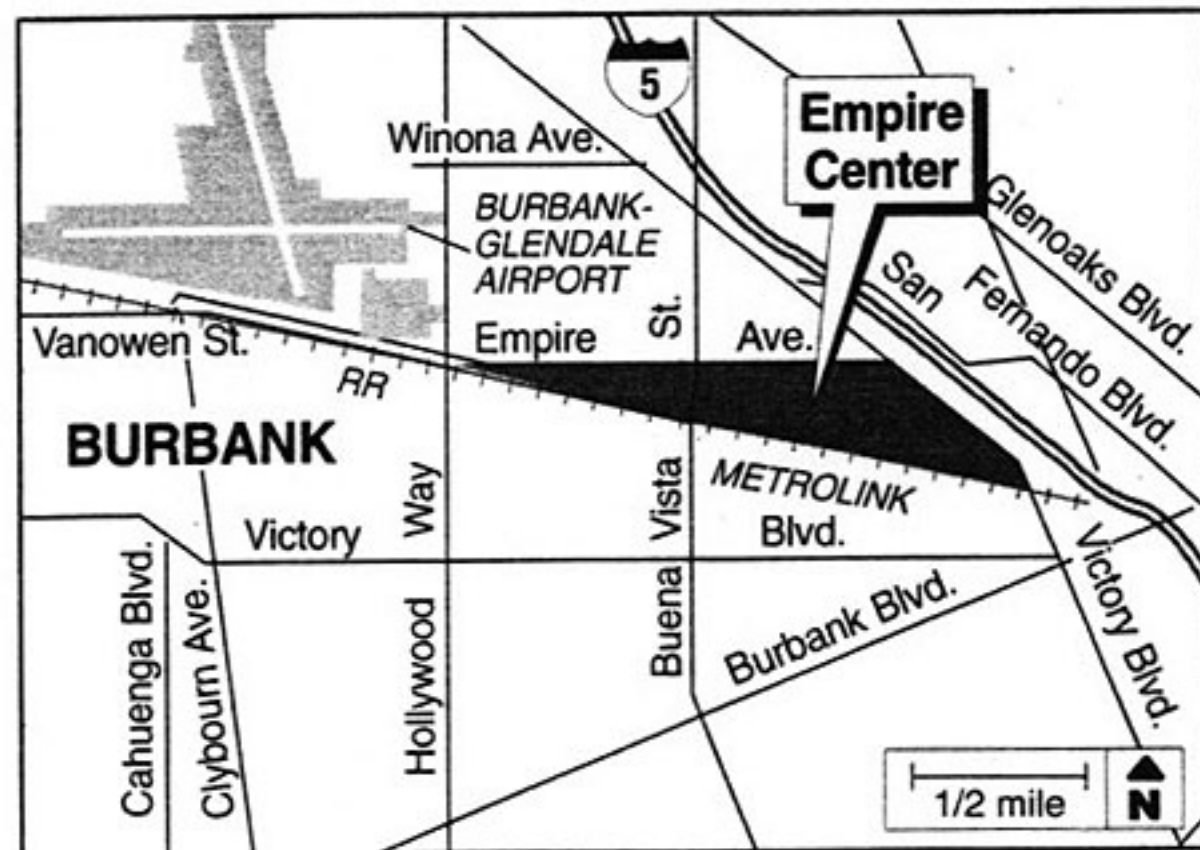
A major advantage for Burbank firms lies in the different tax structure employed by the city, which taxes the number of employees — not gross receipts, as Los Angeles and most municipalities do.

In numbers provided by Kosmont Cos., a Burbank firm with 75 employees and \$7.5 million in annual gross receipts would pay a scant



Charlotte Schmid-Maybach/Staff Photographer

Stephen McCallum, an administrator at the Make-Up Designory, praises Burbank's business-friendly environment.



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\$380 in taxes. The same firm located in Los Angeles would pay \$8,850.

This hyperaccommodation of business draws in firms like the Make-up Designory, a vocational school for

cosmeticians that relocated to Burbank in January. Though the decision was made before the energy crunch fully hit, administrator Stephen McCallum praised the low costs, and just about everything else



Tom Mendoza/Staff Photographer

The Media Center is a popular shopping destination in Burbank, where low utility costs and friendly regulations have made the city a major draw for businesses looking to relocate.

about the city.

"When we started looking around, the Burbank business district was more than welcoming," he said. "That made it a very viable option to us. We also got lucky and found a building that was a gold mine."

The school was hooked in by the town's comfortable living and ample parking — a deal engineered by the city so students and employees can park

for \$20 per month in municipal lots.

With this squared away, the school relocated from Toluca Lake to an 8,000-square-foot converted Firestone building. Setting up shop in Burbank, McCallum said, was a snap.

"The city has a chance to be much more personal when you move in," he said. "We had marvelous one-on-ones with everyone. The city of L.A. is a great town, but they have so

much paperwork they never get a chance to know anyone."

This philosophy is inherent to the city's sense of being, according to those familiar with its economic practices.

"Burbank is a great place for businesses to thrive and prosper," said Georgino, the city's director of community development. "We appreciate very much what has made Burbank as strong as it is: a sense of community and business."