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Supporters and elected officials attended the groundbreaking, made possible after voters approved \$15 million in the last bond election to build University Way and a second road. Officials will break ground on academic buildings later this year or early next year.

Paving the way to school

Ground is broken on the road that eventually will lead to S.A.'s Texas A&M campus.

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A city dweller from Las Vegas, Tom Lozzi now frequently wakes to the sound of roosters crowing outside his home on San Antonio's South Side, where he lives for part of the year.

"I love this land. I love it here," said Lozzi, a principal with the Verno Land Group, a group of investors building a planned community on 2,700 acres of rural farmland along

South Loop 410 near Zarzamora Road. Anchoring the mixed-use village will be the future Texas A&M-San Antonio, an addition Lozzi never planned on when he bought the land three years ago.

"This has morphed into something incredible," Lozzi said. "This is bigger than all of us."

On Friday, Lozzi stood in a field of dirt and mulch alongside supporters

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See the online story for a slideshow of sketches of the campus.

Dr. Maria Hernandez Ferrier (left), executive director and CEO of Texas A&M University-San Antonio, ducks under the ribbon that was to be cut at the ceremony as Jane Macon (far right), of Verano Development, hands out hard hats to attendees including state Sens. Jeff Wentworth (center) and Carlos Uresti.



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Texas A&M-S.A. is one step closer

CONTINUED FROM 1B

and elected officials to break ground on University Way, the road that will lead into the planned campus.

Voters approved \$15 million in the city's last bond election to build the road, plus a second one that will run east to west. Officials won't break ground on academic buildings until later this year or early next year.

According to Lozzi, Verano is already designing and laying out buildings for the dense, pedestrian-friendly village. Because Verano has no debt and donated the land for the campus, the sour economy will not slow progress, she said.

Sketches showing row houses, wide promenades, grocery stores and a sports stadium look like scenes from Boston or San Francisco.

"These are not just pretty pic-

tures. That's what's coming," Lozzi said.

On the university side, officials are asking lawmakers for an extra \$6 million to operate and expand the Texas A&M University-Kingsville system center, the seed campus that will transition into a stand-alone university. When enrollment hits 1,500 full-time students, it will trigger \$40 million in state tuition revenue bonds to build the first academic building.

Still 450 students shy of that target, officials are already hitting up lawmakers for an additional \$60 million in revenue bonds for the second academic building, said Frank Madla III, chairman of the Texas A&M-San Antonio Foundation.

"We have already run out of room, we need more space for the students coming in," Madla said.

On Friday, Madla paid tribute to his father, the late Sen. Frank Madla, for his efforts to bring education to the South Side.

"We are about to break ground on a road that's going to carry a lot of folks to a better life," Madla said.

One of those folks is Shanda McGowen, a 22-year-old history and education major at the seed campus. Sporting a maroon shirt at the groundbreaking, McGowen said she was set on attending Texas A&M, whether in College Station or San Antonio. She started out at Palo Alto College, a community college next door to the seed campus.

"I love my city, so I stayed here," McGowen said. After earning a bachelor's degree, McGowen wants to pursue a Ph.D. and come back to teach at Texas A&M-San Antonio.

"That's my lifelong goal," McGowen said.