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Navistar HQ a realistic target for SA, site expert says

Corporate operations a bigger focus for local economic development experts heading into 2022



Local officials believe Navistar already has the space its needs for a San Antonio headquarters. Navistar International Corp.



By W. Scott Bailey – Senior Reporter, San Antonio Business Journal – Nov. 2, 2021

While talk about the prospect of Navistar Inc. potentially moving its corporate headquarters here may have seemed a long shot to some several months ago, the idea may not be so far-fetched now.

At least one veteran site selection expert believes there is a trend that may work in San Antonio's favor, making Navistar a more attainable target.

John Boyd, principal for The Boyd Co., a Florida-based consulting firm, said more companies are aligning their corporate offices with major production sites — especially in Sun Belt states like Texas, Georgia and Tennessee.

“Just as Tesla's HQ relocation followed its new Austin Gigafactory, Mercedes moved its HQ from New Jersey to Atlanta closer to its Southeast production sites. Bridgestone is doing the same in Nashville,” Boyd said. “I would not be surprised to see increased chatter about Navistar considering moving its HQ out of suburban Chicago to San Antonio in the months ahead.”

Navistar has already shown interest in deepening its South Texas roots. In February, the company acquired the 150-acre campus previously home to Haliburton near Interstate 37 and Loop 1604 to house advanced technology and other services supporting its Alamo City manufacturing activity. The company manufactures and distributes trucks and buses.

Jenna Saucedo-Herrera, president and CEO of greater:SATX, formerly the San Antonio Economic Development Foundation, believes that site could also house the company's headquarters.

Mayor Ron Nirenberg said San Antonio would make a great home for all of the company's operations.

As Navistar is expected to begin production at its commercial truck manufacturing facilities here in the first quarter of 2022, according to greater:SATX officials, the economic recruitment organization is plotting its own course.

“We're shifting our business focus to really hit the target industries stronger than ever as we're coming out of the pandemic ... and especially working on headquarters,” said Tom Long, a managing director for greater:SATX. “We are continually working with Navistar to see what additional opportunities there may be.”

Boyd said Navistar is already a “great economic development success story” for the San Antonio region. He believes its presence here could become even more significant.