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By LARRY PHILLIPS

- Daily Leader

The rumors surrounding the closing of the Valero Express Lane convenience store at 138 West Pancake Blvd. in Liberal that its owner is going bankrupt are totally false. According to owner Dyke Rogers of Dalhart, Texas, that store was closed to concentrate on consolidating his other properties in Liberal.

“With that store, we needed to either do a total remodel or close it,” Rogers said earlier today, “And we just elected to close it and concentrate on our other stores in Liberal.

“We moved all the people to the other stores, so nobody lost their jobs,” he added.

Rogers explained he remodeled the Shell Express Lane store at Western Avenue and Fifteenth Street about a year and a half ago, and that he’s now remodeling the Shell Express Lane on East Pancake Blvd. He also owns the Shell Express Lane store at Western Avenue and West Pancake Avenue and the Express Lane Lube Center.

“We have a substantial investment there in Liberal, but we just wanted to consolidate down,” Rogers said.

Analyzing the market every year or two is part of Rogers business plan to ensure growth, and

he feels downsizing will not only hit Liberal, but across the country as well. He feels Liberal has definitely reached its saturation point for convenience stores.

“I think there are too many convenience stores for that size of town,” Rogers said. “There’s going to continue to be consolidation in this industry – not just in Liberal, but all over the country.

“You’ve got to have nicer, bigger stores, and the smaller, less attractive ones are going to be seen less and less,” he said.

Rogers definitely plans to keep growing in Liberal.

“We think Liberal is a great place to do business, and we’re making a substantial investment there and will continue to do that,” Rogers concluded.

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