



A THRIVING TOWNSHIP

Usa River, a ward of Meru district in Arusha region of northern Tanzania is a fast growing township with more than 21,000 people proving to be a thriving business centre. The number of households is 4264 with an average size of 4 and its economy is expected to grow at a rate of 4.5%. With about 30 large business establishments which include tourist operators, hotels, flower companies, banks etc. and many more medium and small business establishments of which all depend on suppliers from the Arusha town more than 30km away. Two universities, two colleges, about six NGOs and more than 10 secondary and primary schools, Usa, as is famously known braces itself with a considerable population of professionals which attract a lot more business investments as these are a fast growing customer base for different kinds of products and services.

Foreign expatriates who very much like the climate of the township and have settled within its outskirts have been driving all the way to Arusha for simple needs such as a cup of coffee, or a kilo of meat. The nearby facilities prove to be of a very low quality for the upper middle class community of professionals and expatriates that is growing at an alarming rate. It is of no doubt at all that the local community is also in need of a different kind of facility coupled with exceptional quality simply because of the changes in attitude and definitely the trend whereby people have been queuing in the only two small shopping centers which seem overwhelmed.

The Meru community bank which is about to be opened in the near future, the establishment of the Meru district headquarters and being the town nearest to the Arusha national park and the Mount Meru proves to be the central point of tourism and hospitality industry. The cool atmosphere and calm surroundings attract investors in education to agricultural sectors not to forget the retailing establishments which have seen a tremendous increase of about 73% in the past year which is due to the 3.4% population growth rate.



Consider the following table of statistics

SN	TYPE OF BUSINESS	2007	2008	2009
3	TOURISM HOTELS	15	16	16
6	GUEST HOUSES	26	30	35
7	BUILDING CONTRACTORS	10	12	14
8	ART SHOPS	7	8	8
9	WHOLESALE SHOPS	17	21	24
10	RETAIL SHOPS	250	336	460
14	GRAVEL & AGGREGATE	5	7	7
16	MILLS	28	34	44
17	BARS		147	251
18	LOCAL BREWERS		41	54
19	PART II POISON SHOPS	71	74	77
20	AGRICULTURAL INPUTS	12	21	53
21	PETROL STATIONS	8	9	9
22	BUTCHERS	98	104	113
23	TIMBER YARDS		3	7
24	WELDING CENTERS		2	5
26	RESTAURANTS		4	7
27	SOFT DRINKS DISTRIBUTORS	2	5	6
29	SECRETARIAL SERVICES		6	10
30	STATIONERIES		7	16
31	DRY CLEANING SERVICES		2	3

(Source: Meru District trade office)



The Arusha Region population density per square kilometer as of 2009 was 45 individuals ranking 11th amongst the 21 mainland regions. With the country's GDP growth of nearly 6.2% is a strong indicator of a flourishing town which is located near the Africa's tourist hub. There are a number of large construction projects undertaken in and around Usa which also signify a tremendous growth of investment activities. This pace of growth and development is commended by Architect Makumba T. Kimweri, Chief Executive of the Tanzania Building Agency (TBA) when he commented on the real estate opportunities in Tanzania. In his words: "There are many investment opportunities in real estate in Tanzania. Most people don't realize the pace of the development that's happening here and I invite them to come and see for themselves". (Source: www.tanzaniainvest.com) Consider the following list of large construction projects currently being undertaken in Usa:-

1. The Old Moshi road construction
2. The Mandela University Campus
3. The Momela road – Towards Arusha National park
4. The Meru Municipal Council Headquarters

Conclusion

The above table shows a tremendous increase in the construction of guest houses, mills, wholesale shops, retail shops, bars butchers and stationery shops. Also the construction projects which are underway show how fast Usa –River is growing. The business potential especially in retailing is awesome, just as how its increase in the number of retail establishments is.