Joe Brocato's model downtown Alexandria made for farsighted businessmen.

Alexandria's downtown has problems—problems threatening to turn it into Alexandria's Ghost Town. People and freight have trouble getting into it and out of it through a tangled network of streets. Furthermore, the district is blocked in by the Red River and by several sets of railroad tracks which make expansion seem all but impossible.

Hemmed-in businesses were moving out—out to where they would have room to expand.

Those businesses that fled created a new set of problems for themselves. They were on the outskirts, well and good, but they were also away from many of their customers and from many of their sources of supply. But they had to expand and keep pace with a fast-moving economy. A business dies by standing still.

Was there any way to revive Alexandria's central business district—a district that served a 12-parish area?

After a dozen firms made the move to the outskirts, architect Joseph Brocato worked up a plan of the metropolitan area for some of Alexandria's leading businessmen. His plan allowed room for their downtown firms to grow.

Brocato, a 1937 graduate of Tulane where he was a crackerjack lightweight boxer, showed the businessmen how to make their present locations more at-