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This presentation was intended to accompany the article on the National First Ladies Library, Canton, featured in the February issue of Properties.

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April 2005

Properties Springs Into Full Color



KEN KRYCH

“For the first time in our 60 years publishing, *Properties* is now presenting all of our features in full color.”

Something we had been planning for some time has become a reality with this issue. For the first time in our 60 years publishing, *Properties* is now presenting features in full color.

This is the latest step in a long line of improvements we have put into place over the last few years to best showcase Northern Ohio's top work in construction, architecture and related fields. We are confident that this will do justice to the exemplary projects, products and people we cover while providing you, our readers and advertisers, even more diverse, vibrant articles.

In addition, full color custom reprints are available for any feature in our magazine. For more information on reprints, visit us online at www.propertiesmag.com or call us at 216.251.0035.

Throughout our history, we have thrived on the input of our readers and advertisers and that continues today. If you are currently working on a project that you think would be a good fit for *Properties*, I encourage you to contact us at

kkrych@PropertiesMag.com. Send us color photos and news about your firm, projects and people. Also, check our editorial calendar (page 11) and know we welcome articles from local experts on the various topics we cover each month.

This month we proudly bring you one of the largest projects in ever-growing Lorain County. The Lorain County Justice Center in Elyria's town square is a most impressive structure, which was planned in great detail and built with professional execution by all concerned in a construction management team effort.

Also, this being our Property & Facility Management issue, we called upon many sources to bring to you information from many different angles and experience.

A special welcome to Alec Pacella, CCIM at Grubb & Ellis Company as our new guest writer for Financial Strategies. We are confident his expertise and insights will be enlightening and informative.

Next month, we are producing a special 90th anniversary BOMA article focusing on this fine association's

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past, present and goal-oriented future. The May issue will also highlight the latest development in Little Italy: Random Road Lofts and the new CCF Center for Regenerative Medicine. Lastly, we plan to heat things up with our special Mechanical Systems and Contracting section. With summer around the corner, we'll explore how engineering and service plan an essential role in keeping buildings and their occupants comfortable. Also on the way... a few more surprises!

I hope you enjoy this issue and others soon to come.

My best,



Ken Krych

Letters

The Cleveland/Akron IIDA thanks you for contributing to the success of the 2004 AIA/IIDA Awards. Your help was truly appreciated.

Laura Shannon
Cleveland IIDA

Wow, [regarding the March 2005] what a great issue! We were very pleased with the way our ad looked. I totally trusted you and you made it work! Thank you, and as always, it's a pleasure working with you.

Susan Ristagno
Pete & Pete Container Service

"What a great article you did on the House of Blues"

Larry Brewer
Inter-Products inc.

On behalf of C B Richard Ellis (CBRE), thank you for publishing several CBRE items in the [March] of Properties Magazine. I really enjoyed the House of Blues special insert.

Deborah Kavulich
C B Richard Ellis

Editorial Calendar

JANUARY

FINANCIAL REVIEW & FORECASTS

Experts weigh in on industry trends and issues of the past 12 months and those of the new year, with a focus on legal & financial affairs.

FEBRUARY

LANDSCAPING

The latest information in a growing field. From how to create curb appeal to picking the best maintenance contractor, we'll be planting ideas.

MARCH

ROOFING & INSULATION

New products, techniques, systems and maintenance programs as they relate to today's building and design.

APRIL

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

A comprehensive guide to property management, from hiring personnel to financing investments.

MAY

MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

With summer around the corner, we'll explore how engineering and service play an essential role in keeping buildings comfortable.

JUNE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

From land assessments to lead paint, we'll ask the experts for advice and answers.

JULY

DESIGN/BUILD

A thorough look at this growing field with articles relating to the top local projects and their design/build firms.

AUGUST

LIGHTING & HEATING

The important details of choosing proper lighting and heating systems with insights into the newest trends, products and techniques.

SEPTEMBER

GREEN BUILDING & ENVIRONMENTAL SOLUTIONS

From brownfields redevelopment to deconstruction, we highlight the latest approaches to green building.

OCTOBER

SECURITY & FIRE PROTECTION

A focus on the products and services that prevent crime and accidents from haunting property owners and tenants.

NOVEMBER

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

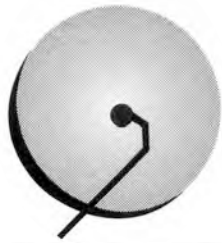
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Moving On Up

Pinnacle condos to offer dramatic views, quality living

By Mark Watt

In 2001, Georgalis Investment Realty, LLC opened The Cloak Factory, a 94,000-square-foot, mixed-use development at 635 W. Lakeside Ave. in Cleveland's Warehouse District. Featuring retail space at ground level, office space on the second floor and 15 residential units on the upper three floors, the facility offered contemporary spaces for living and working within a walking distance from downtown. Georgalis Investment Realty Principal Gus Georgalis says his intent with the development was to "provide quality living and set the standard in the area."

With Pinnacle, a new luxury high-rise condominium and rental tower opening next door to The Cloak Factory this summer, Georgalis hopes to set the standard in the area once again.

The 14-story building, featuring metal and glass curtainwalls, will offer 80 residential suites, including about 50 for-sale units and 30 rental spaces. An urban, gated community, Pinnacle will offer amenities such as 24-hour concierge service, a car wash and fitness center. Situated atop a pre-existing three-story garage at 701

W. Lakeside Ave. that has been expanded with additional floors for a total of 120 parking spaces, Pinnacle will also boast private gardens that will be located on the garage's roof.

"The gardens will include a greenhouse, a barbeque area, a gazebo and an area to grow flowers," Georgalis says. "It will be a place where residents can meet and interact."

Designed by Cleveland-based architectural firm Schmidtcope-landparkerstevens with Georgalis Investment Realty handling general contracting on its own, the building

will allow unobstructed, panoramic views of the lake from each unit, assisted by the use of curved, wave-shaped exterior walls.

"There are not too many buildings in Cleveland with such a nice, wide-angle view of the city," says Humberto Olivos, project architect with Schmidtopelandparkerstevens.

The design also shields each unit's balcony from its neighbors to allow for privacy.

"If you look at the floorplan, its design resembles a fish spine," Georgalis says. "Units are set diagonally off of the hallways so that each faces either northeast or northwest. When you open your door of each unit, the focus will be on the lake."

Penthouse suites will be configured on the top three floors of the build-

"There are not too many buildings in Cleveland with such a nice, wide-angle view of the city"

**Humberto Olivos
Schmidtopelandparkerstevens**

ing, with the two top floors intended for use as a single story with ceilings extending from 19 to 27 feet high.

"Since the exterior is composed almost entirely of glass, these penthouses will be quite dramatic," Georgalis says.

Condo units will range from roughly \$300,000 to possibly more than \$1 million for build-to-suit spaces on Pinnacle's top level.

Interior finishes will include designer tiles, hardwood floors, granite and marble vanities, floor-to-ceiling windows and fireplaces.

Georgalis says residents will likely begin moving in this June.

"Things are shaping up very well and sales are strong," he says. "We're about 40% sold right now and should be about 75% sold by the time the building opens." **P**




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Hometown Hits

Cleveland Choice Awards program celebrates best in home building

By Ken Krych

Photos courtesy of Cleveland HBA

The Greater Cleveland chapter of the Home Builders Association, coming off a record year in new home construction and with the new year going strong, selected "Celebrating Excellence in My Town" as the theme of its annual awards event.

Held at Renaissance hotel in downtown Cleveland recently, the Cleveland Choice Awards featured local music legend Michael Stanley as master of ceremonies.

Hundreds attended the event, which included 110 award categories featuring the best in home design, building and sales.

The show was very entertaining from the start with special lighting effects dancing on the ballroom ceiling and many special video presentations throughout the presentation of awards.

Michael Stanley held the show tightly together and offered some good-natured quips about awards the Michael Stanley Band had received over the years.



TOPS IN 'MY TOWN' Local music legend Michael Stanley serves as master of ceremonies at the Home Builders Association awards program.

"One of the first awards we received was in the old Agora which is now a parking lot for CSU and another at the Coliseum which is now a field, so enjoy the moment," he said.

Nate Kaufmann, executive director of HBA Greater Cleveland credits the awards committee and

many volunteers for making the awards in excellence a wonderful evening. A sampling of the winners:

Single Family (Homes) Product of the Year

Whitlach & Co., Brittany Homes, Pulte Homes, Ryan Homes, Colony Home Builders, Unmistakably



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Premier Homes, Brittany Homes, Pulte Homes, B.R. Knez Construction Inc. and Prestige Homes

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Condo Clusters

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Exterior Architectural Design (Single Family)

Whitlach & Co., Zaremba Co., Classic Homes, Parkview Homes, Pepperwood Home Builders, Petros Homes Inc., Prestige Homes, D'Amico Builders and Europa

Exterior Architectural Design Condo Cluster

Sylvester Builders, Zaremba, The Coral Company, Sylvester Builders, Pulte Homes, Petros Homes Inc., King James Residential and Parkview Homes



BREAKING RECORDS The Cleveland Choice Awards Committee worked to make this year a record-breaking event. The awards experienced the most entries, the highest number of sponsors and the most ever attendees.

Community of the Year (Single Family)

Unmistakably Premier Homes, Pulte Homes, Parkview and Petros Homes.

Remodeling Awards

Makoski Construction Co., City Architecture, RSA Architects, Kay Homes, Terry Bennett Builders & Remodelers and B.R. Knez Construction Inc.

Community of the Year (Condo)

City Architecture, Parkview Homes, Rysar Properties and Petros Homes

Custom Home of the Year

RSA Architects
Judges Choice

RSA Architects, Custom Home of the Year **P**

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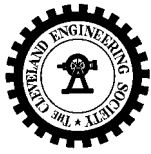


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CALLING THE CREATIVE CLASS Harry Anderson, of Barber & Hoffman, and David Grinstead, of Shook Heavy & Environmental, celebrate their Hall of Fame Awards

Engineering the Future

Conference focuses on high performance infrastructure

By Ken Krych

Cleveland Engineering Society's recent 53rd Annual Design & Construction Conference, held at Cleveland's IX Center, was host to hundreds of professionals who spent the day learning from experts, networking and discussing the subject of infrastructure.

The day began with an "Award of Excellence Presentation" for the Cleveland Hopkins International Expansion Project.

The opening session was "Innovative Financing and Project Delivery Methods in Tough Economic Times."

Moderated by David N. Goss, senior director of transportation and infrastructure for the Greater Cleveland Partnership, the session featured three speakers whose diverse backgrounds provided insights to new and alternative project delivery methods.

Nate Green of the Cleveland/Cuyahoga Port Authority explained how the bond financing and leasing programs are marketed to public and privately held companies for the acquisition and construction of buildings.

In addition, the Port Authority works with local government officials and developers to finance public infrastructure utilizing tax-increment financing (TIF) and special assessments.

The Port Authority has been involved in financing many important projects throughout the region such as University Square Shopping Center (\$40,600,000) in 2001, Superior Avenue Streetscape in University Heights (\$2,965,000) in 2004 and the upcoming Cityview Shopping Center in Garfield Heights (\$8,850,000) in 2004.

Mike Biesiada, of Donley's Inc., explained how public private legislation was recently used to develop a downtown revitalization project for the City of Fredericksburg, Virginia. This partnership included the acquisition of land and the turnkey development of structured parking. Locally, Donley's has been involved with innovative financed projects with both Cleveland Clinic and Metro Hospital.

Throughout the day, breakout sessions elaborated on many important topics relevant to technology, water and transportation infrastructure, led by top individuals in their field.

One of the highlights of the day was the induction of two individuals for their outstanding achievements in the field of construction, architecture and engineering.

Both Harry G. Anderson, of Barber & Hoffman Inc., and David Grinstead, of Shook Heavy and & Environmental, received their Hall of Fame Awards as an acknowledgement for their contribution toward the betterment of the industry and their civic and community involvement which go far beyond the day-to-day routine of their business or jobs.

Informative sessions on fiber optics networks and wireless communication, current and future projects at NEORS and the benefits and tradeoffs of using concrete or asphalt continued throughout the day as, in between, participants gathered information and networked among the many booths and sponsors. **P**

Founded in 1880, the Cleveland Engineering Society is a professional membership organization. CES currently celebrating its 25th anniversary and more can be learned at www.cesnet.org

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Bright Idea

New home for broadcast media and more to open soon on Playhouse Square

By Ken Krych

It won't be long before WVIZ/PBS & 90.3 WCPN Ideastream moves into its new home at 1375 Euclid Avenue at Playhouse Square. Work is nearing completion with a June opening date set for the 254,000-square-foot, seven-story renovation and addition at a total cost of approximately \$42 million.

A partnership that is the first of its kind in the nation finds Ideastream and the Playhouse Square Foundation joining forces to renovate the One Playhouse Square Building and create the Idea Center at Playhouse Square - a center for the arts, technology and education.



COME TOGETHER The center for arts, technology and education is nearing completion with a June opening date scheduled.

Demolition began in September 2002 under a construction management contract with Turner Construction Company with bids being taken in the fall of 2003 and

full construction schedules set in December 2004.

The first three floors (approximately 90,000 square feet) will be used by Ideastream and Playhouse Square's arts education departments. The building was totally gutted and retains just one tenant; the "Intown Club," a private women's social association formed in the 1930s, remains on the third floor.

URS, a San Francisco-based global engineering firm, has recently moved its local offices to take over the entire sixth floor and part of the fifth. The remaining some 150,000 will be white-boxed out for future tenants.

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Westlake Reed Leskosky, lead designer and architect for the facility, has a close affiliation with Playhouse Square in prior redevelopment in the area.

Taking a tour recently, Properties learned through Mark Dent and Jack Kellogg, project managers at Turner Construction, that new skylights were cut into the roof, the former

**The first three floors
will be used by
Ideastream and
Playhouse Square's
arts education
departments**

exterior metal siding was removed and the building was re-skinned with concrete and brick in-fill. Wood and steel water tanks, which sit atop the building, are enclosed and many of the 12-foot-high windows were replaced.

A new 300-seat studio theater to accommodate television productions and intimate theatrical performances and a loading dock addition (off Dodge Court) were added to the west side of the structure. The new studio has "movable seating." Extensive design has gone into the systems for the new television studios, specifically acoustical engineering and electrical back-up systems.

Originally designed by noted Cleveland architectural firm Walker & Weeks, the building built in 1912 has been home to a retail home furnishing store Kinney & Levan, the Cleveland Public Library, Stouffer's corporate headquarters and WJW radio, where Alan Freed first coined the term "rock 'n' roll."

When completed, the facility will include a street-front studio on Euclid Avenue, where passersby can see what is being broadcast, along with a dance studio for rehearsals and master classes. Approximately 450 professional will occupy the One Playhouse Square Building. **P**

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Rewarding Safety

Annual awards program encourages accident prevention

By Ken Krych

For only the second time in 11 years it came down to the last man standing out of 15 finalists to turn the key and win a new pick-up truck. Paul Kistner, of Bricklayers Local 5, was the lucky fellow who won the grand prize, a shiny, black 2005 Chevy Silverado.

The award was part of the Safety Incentive Program's (SIP) 11th Annual Contractor Safety Awards, held in March at Embassy Suites Hotel in Independence. The program recognizes contractors for exemplary health and safety programs through the analysis of number of days away from work case rates.

Stephen M Kinn, SIP project director, welcomed roughly 300 contractors who attended stating that the past year had been one of the safest ones on record. He introduced Mayor Jane Campbell, who hailed



IF THE KEY FITS, TAKE IT Paul Kistner, Jr., of Bricklayers Local #5, won a new pick-up truck at this year's Safety Incentive Program's luncheon.

the importance of "prevailing wage rates" and local contractors winning bids and contracts for projects within the city, especially Cleveland Schools. "Secrets To Success" was the theme of the keynote speaker

Carlos Figueroa Jr., Director of Safety at Donley's Inc. **P**

The Safety Incentive program has been designed to encourage union contractors and union craftspeople to be more aware of working safely on the job site.



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The program’s policies and procedures are developed by a standing committee of the Building Owners and Managers Association of Greater Cleveland. That committee derives its authority from the Board of Trustees of BOMA Greater Cleveland.

Several of the committee members are also current members of the board. The committee is additionally comprised of several active property managers whose buildings and/or employers are members of BOMA Greater Cleveland.

Staff support is provided principally by employees of the CHAMPS Program of the Greater Cleveland Hospital Association.

The process begins with a complete analysis of potential product categories and

prospective vendors by the experienced professionals on the BOMA Group Purchasing Committee. After this evaluation, contracts are awarded and then made available to all members of BOMA. New categories are added on a regular basis. New contracts are distributed to BOMA Members as they are awarded.

New BOMA members receive a complete Group Purchasing Binder upon joining BOMA which includes a full listing of all contracts and how to take advantage of them.

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Find out how your building or company can take advantage of BOMA Greater Cleveland’s Group Purchasing Program.

**Fred Capretta, RPA
President**

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Construction Holds Steady in February

At a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$573.0 billion, new construction starts in February were essentially unchanged from the previous month, according to McGraw-Hill Construction, a division of The McGraw-Hill Companies. Residential building continued at a healthy pace and public works rebounded from a weak January. However, nonresidential building in February lost momentum. For the first two months of 2005, total construction on an unadjusted basis came to \$78.9 billion, basically the same amount reported during the first two months of 2004.

February's data produced a 173 reading for the Dodge Index (1996=100), unchanged from a revised 173 for January.

The Dodge Index averaged 179 during the latter half of 2004, so compared to recent months new construction starts have experienced a modest slowdown.



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The McGraw-Hill Companies

“Total construction in 2005 is not likely to repeat the 10% growth witnessed in 2004, but the overall level of activity is still expected to stay close to last year,” says Robert A. Murray, vice president of economic affairs for McGraw-Hill Construction.

Residential building

Residential building in February increased 2% to \$347.2 billion (annual rate). Single family housing advanced 3%, while multifamily housing was unchanged from the previous month.

During February, the cost of financing remained very supportive for single family housing, as the 30-year fixed mortgage rate slipped to 5.6% following January’s 5.7%. However, in March long-term interest rates began to move upward, with the 30-year fixed rate reaching 6.0% towards the end of the month.

Continuing the trend of recent months, multifamily housing in February was helped by a large volume of condominium work.

Nonresidential building

Nonresidential building in February fell 12% to \$128.0 billion (annual rate). Reduced contracting was reported for stores, down 7%; offices, down 10%; and warehouses, down 26%.

Manufacturing plant construction plunged 59% from an exceptionally strong January that included the start of a large semiconductor plant in Texas.

The institutional side of the non-residential market included weakness for churches, down 10%; healthcare facilities, down 20%; amusement-related projects, down 26%; and public buildings (courthouses/ detention facilities), down 44%.

There were a few nonresidential structure types that registered growth in February. Educational buildings, the largest nonresidential category by dollar volume, increased 8%.

Major projects reaching the groundbreaking stage in February included a \$125 million research facility in New York City and an \$80 million high school in Virginia. Hotel construction in February grew

April Construction Contracts for Cleveland Area

McGraw-Hill Construction recently reported on April contracts for future construction in the metropolitan statistical area of Cleveland, consisting of Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain and Medina counties. An authority on the construction market, the firm produces Dodge Reports and Sweets Catalog Files. According to the Dodge Analytics unit of McGraw-Hill Construction, the latest month’s construction activity followed this pattern:

	2005	2004	Percent Change
Nonresidential	\$30,408,000	\$49,572,000	-39
Residential	\$85,079,000	\$104,486,000	-19
Total Building	\$115,487,000	\$154,058,000	-25

For the year-to-date on a cumulative basis, the totals are:

	2005	2004	Percent Change
Nonresidential	\$86,758,000	\$175,989,000	-51
Residential	\$170,590,000	\$183,963,000	-7
Total Building	\$257,348,000	\$359,952,000	-29

- Nonresidential buildings include commercial, manufacturing, educational, religious, administrative, recreational, hotel, dormitory and other buildings.
- Residential buildings include one- and two-family houses and apartments.

11%, showing modest improvement after the low amounts of the previous two months.

Transportation terminal work improved 36% over a very subdued January, helped by the start of two major renovation projects for subway and train terminals in New York City, together totaling \$78 million.

On an unadjusted basis, the no change for total construction in 2005’s January-February period was

due to this pattern by sector, relative to last year - residential building, up 5%; nonbuilding construction, up 9%; and nonresidential building, down 15%.

By geography, total construction performed as follows in 2005’s first two months - the South Central, up 11%; the South Atlantic, up 2%; the West and Northeast, each steady with the same period of 2004; and the Midwest, down 15%. **P**

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Law in Order

By John Elliott | Photos by David Joseph

Lorain County Justice Center expands space for county services in Elyria's town square

The wheels of justice are turning a little faster in Lorain County, Cuyahoga County's western neighbor, thanks to the recent completion of the new Lorain County Justice Center in Elyria's town square. The completion of the eight-floor, 224,540-square-foot building that consumes an entire block was no small feat, given the need to consolidate separate buildings.

The new center meets the needs of a growing community, provides state-of-the-art security and telecommunications, and preserves the architectural design of one of the state's most famous, historic town squares.

The Justice Center reinforces Lorain County's commitment to downtown Elyria, and provides

county residents with a convenient county complex offering the majority of services within walking distance within the county seat.

The tall, steel-frame building has a commanding presence in the downtown, which is certainly appropriate for a justice center.

Viewed from a distance, the rows of windows on every floor form a vertical pattern against the exterior Berea Sandstone™ from Cleveland Quarries, in South Amherst, stating an institutional purpose but also reflecting the character of the older downtown buildings.

"You just can't have a bland tall building," says Bob Weygandt, project architect for Cleveland-based Collins Gordon Bostwick, which provided architectural services for the building. "The owner was con-

cerned that when you build a structure this size and you have one of the best downtown squares in Ohio, that you keep the character. They wanted to make sure that our building didn't destroy that quaintness."

Design meets local needs

The design had to be approved by the city design review board, Weygandt notes. The local officials appreciated the fact that the light-colored stones blend in well with the two old churches across the street on Third Street.

"We tried to reflect the preparation of our building with what's across the street," he says.

The building won a Lorain County Beautiful Award. Besides the similarity in materials, the elevator tower that protrudes from the front of the building mimics the towers of the nearby churches.



POWERFUL PATTERN Viewed from a distance, the rows of windows on every floor form a vertical pattern against the exterior Berea Sandstone™.

The Justice Center will consolidate all of the courts and their support services previously housed in six separate buildings. The new building offers the latest advancements in telecommunications and courtroom electronics equipment for evidence presentation. These include video arraignment and real-time transcription, along with accommodations for the media. The

Justice Center will consolidate all of the courts and their support services previously housed in six separate buildings. The new building offers the latest advancements in telecommunications and courtroom electronics equipment for evidence presentation. These include video arraignment and real-time transcription, along with accommodations for the media. The building is a secure facility consistent with the guidelines of the Ohio Supreme Court rules prescribing security and safety.

Three separate circulation systems allow independent movement for the public, court personnel, and prisoners throughout the facility.

The facility also provides for the needs of the county sheriff's department

with holding cells, support space, separate juvenile and women's holding areas, secure interview rooms, prisoner transport elevators, a basement level vehicle sally port and secure underground parking for 23 vehicles. Security systems include special building protection techniques, lighting, cameras, screening for explosives and weapons, duress

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alarms and systems for video monitoring and recording.

The entrance to the new Justice Center on Court Street faces the town square and the historic county courthouse built in 1880. The space between the two buildings consists mainly of parking with future plans to beautify the space into a public park atmosphere. The secure lobby area, a double-height space, is the heart of the entry sequence and is the building's primary orientation space from which the public proceeds to all other spaces in the building.

The public corridor wall facing the square combines stone with glass in a curtainwall manner. By blending, patterning and texturing the exterior of the building, the architect's brick pattern design that uses various tones of brick based on the hue of the sandstone becomes consistent with the existing buildings on the square.

From vision to reality

"From vision to reality" is how the program guide for the grand opening ceremony describes the project. The process of making the vision a reality

involved the cooperation of the entire community. The project was one of the most extensive the area has witnessed, and the construction had to be organized in a way that would not disrupt the community.

The need for a new justice center was formally recognized in 1989 with the formation of a citizens committee. Lorain County was growing as Greater Cleveland sprawled westward. The farming communities in the surrounding area were becoming more residential, and as the population grew, so did the demands on law enforcement.

"There was definitely a need and the need was for space," says Karen L. Davis, special projects manager for

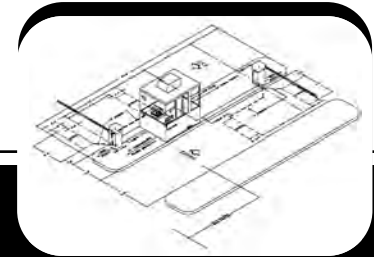
the Lorain County Commissioners, who served as the county's point person on the project. "With the increase in population, you have an increase in crime. The courts are overloaded."

She notes that the judges average 600 to 700 cases per month. It didn't help matters that the departments were split among different buildings. The five judges in the general division were housed in the old courthouse. The jury commissioners and one of three of the domestic relations judges were in an annex building, while the remaining domestic relations judges and other juvenile and family services were in the County Administration building.

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SAFE SPACE The secure lobby area, a double-height space, is the heart of the entry sequence and is the building's primary orientation space from which the public proceeds to all other spaces in the building.

"They were all over," Davis said.

The new building will accommodate the county's needs for the next 20 years, Davis says.

In 1995, the county purchased several properties on Court and Third Streets, which then consisted of older homes, many of which had been converted to business use. Davis noted that the property owners understood the need for a new courthouse and were very cooperative.

Building will handle future growth

The commissioners hired a consultant to identify the demands that the population growth would bring through the next few decades, and to determine how large a facility was needed.

In 1997 the county purchased more property on Third Street and the fol-

lowing year advertised for proposals from construction management companies. The project called for a 120,000-square-foot criminal justice/office building to house offices for the county court of common pleas, the county prosecutor, clerk of courts, and other county offices.

In 1999, the county hired Cleveland-based Collins Gordon Bostwick for architectural services and Cleveland-based R.P. Carbone Co. for construction management services. The next year, the commissioners decided to almost double the amount of space to 245,276 square feet. Groundbreaking began in 2002, following the demolition of the buildings on Court Street.

Hellmuth Obada & Kassabaum Inc., a St. Louis, Missouri-based design firm that specializes in justice facilities, served as design consult-

ants. Robert Schwartz, a project designer with the company, says an objective was to build the structure to actually face the existing courthouse and the town square.

"The building kind of fills a hole in the square," he says.

The design team faced a challenge when a change in county commissioners took place as the design plans were being completed. Some of the budget plans were changed, which affected the design.

"Everyone worked together to get the most out of the building for the owner," he says.

Actual construction took about two years. The project was completed with little impact on downtown traffic, thanks to careful planning and regular meetings between the county, architect and construction manager.



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There were multiple prime contractors, including structural steel, plumbing, masonry, electrical, security electronics, interiors, landscaping, roofing, glass and floor coverings. The county tried to provide for as much local participation as possible, patronizing close to 40 local businesses, Davis says. All office furniture, for example, came from Bobel Office Plus in Amherst.

"We wanted to make sure that we got as much local participation as we could," she says.

"It was a team effort all the way between the architect, the construction manager and the owner."

A full team effort

Getting the correct sandstone to the site was a challenge in itself, notes Rick Sias, project manager for R.P. Carbone Co.

"We had to utilize a remote staging area for large deliveries such as structural steel," he says. "Just about everything had to come in a day before the contractors needed it."

Utilizing driven piles for shoring wasn't an option. Caution was used in vibratory compaction as it could have created vibrations that could have damaged priceless Tiffany stained-glass windows at a nearby church.

"We tried to be as kind to our neighbors as we could with respect to that," he says.

It was also necessary for a gas line to be installed a few blocks along

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CLASSIC MATERIALS, CONTEMPORARY LOOK The walls behind the judge's bench are made of quartered cherry wood, as is the bench itself. The walls in the courtroom consist of large rectangular blocks outlined by linear grooves, called reveals.

West Avenue since there was not adequate gas pressure in the line outside the building.

In the early phase of construction, the weather did not cooperate and the project faced delays and cost overruns, but in the end, the project finished on time and under budget by about \$3.5 million.

As with all excavations, there were artifacts uncovered, including a steam line made of wood and an old water well. Some of these items were donated to the Lorain County Historical Society.

The most difficult period was the last three weeks, when offices were moved into the new building. More than 300 people were moved from adjacent buildings to the new building in stages coordinated by the county. Special parking arrangements were made so that the 200 construction workers would not have to park in the immediate area, which would have disrupted normal activity for local businesses.

"Throughout the entire neighborhood, we tried to accommodate everybody," Davis says.

KS Associates, a civil engineering and land-surveying firm based in Elyria, was selected to perform surveying services for this project. KS Associates provided boundary and topographic surveys that were used to determine the exact location of the new justice center building, and to install communications lines to tie together the existing administration and courthouse buildings.

When construction began, KS Associates was retained to establish the control lines for the construction layout of the building. This component of the project was critical considering the physical constraints of the site, which are commonly present in downtown urban development projects. Installing the foundation in just the right location avoided encroachment into surrounding street rights-of-way.

Security integral to design

As with most justice centers, security was a major concern.

"We based our security in the building on Supreme Court guidelines," Davis says.

The security system was the last of the contracts bid. The county wanted to make sure that they not only got the best bid possible, but the latest possible technology.

Robert Schwartz, one of the project architects, noted that the circulation was segregated so that in-custody defendants would never cross paths with jurors. The defendants enter the building through a basement garage and are led through a secured area to holding cells, never seeing a juror till they enter the courtroom.

A key security feature is a separate elevator used by the judges. The judges' chambers are located on one side of the seventh floor; the opposite side has courtrooms. The elevator doors for the secured shaft and the stairwell all have combination locks. The private elevator is also used for freight deliveries.

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ment. Bob Myers, a sales design engineer for the company, says prisoner transport vehicles have radio frequency identification (RFID) tags that activate the garage door. The prisoners are then escorted to the secured area.

Guards stationed at access points communicate via the intercom with the command center. The entire system, consisting of closed circuit TV, voice intercom, motion sensors, glass break sensors and panic sensors are integrated electronically.

The judges have exclusive access to their chambers. There are a few access points controlled by biometric reader. Myers explains that in order to use a biometric reader, the person's hand is placed in a scanner. Afterwards, the reader is able to recognize that individual.

Air conditioning intake units were built well above the ground to prevent the possibility of a smoke bomb making its way into the building via the air conditioning system, noted Phil Soule, Jr., an associate at Columbus, Ohio-based Korda/Nemeth Engineering, which designed the heating and air conditioning, plumbing and electrical systems. He said the owners were



PREVENTIVE MEASURES As with most justice centers, security was a major concern. "We based our security in the building on Supreme Court guidelines," says Karen L. Davis, with the Lorain County Commissioners.

concerned that someone could try to force the evacuation of the building in this manner.

Contemporary interior design

The interior design is contemporary, featuring simple shapes on the walls and a consistent color scheme of beige, burgundy and light-colored wood. The character is functional but not sterile. Many of the wood doors have burgundy border panels. Carpeting throughout the building is a medium blue texture.

One design pattern found on many of the walls is a horizontal band that is delineated by a pair of parallel linear grooves. In some areas, such as in the courtrooms, these horizontal bands have a different color than the rest of the wall. This serves to medi-

ate the space in these large rooms.

Jury rooms and judge's chambers are on the top levels offering expansive views. There are ten courtrooms and each courtroom has its own jury room. Each room is sound-proofed and has insulated glass windows with blinds. Each jury room has a counter sink, a large marker board on the wall and a direct phone to the judge's secretary. The judge's chambers include a reception area, judge's office, office space for staff,

conference room and a break room. Each judge was provided a furniture budget and ordered his own office furniture.

People can be admitted individually to the judge's side of the building from the courtroom side.

State-of-the-art courtroom

Each courtroom has the defendant and plaintiff seats in the center of the room, facing the judge, stenographer and bailiff.

The jury box faces all of these parties, while there are rows of spectator seats behind the defendant and plaintiff areas on both sides of the courtroom entrance.

Robert Schwartz, the project designer, notes that one of the judges was particularly interested in using

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technology to make information more accessible in the courtroom. The judge, stenographer and plaintiff sections are all wired to enable computer screens.

One section of the ceiling has a projector screen built into it, allowing the screen to drop down at the push of a button to provide a video presentation.

The walls behind the judge's bench are made of quartered cherry wood, as is the bench itself. The walls in the courtroom consist of large rectangular blocks outlined by linear grooves, called reveals.

Getting the reveals to run from the drywall through the wood required coordination between Forum Manufacturing Inc., the Midford Center, which fabricated the architectural millwork and veneer panels, and Wickliffe-based GQ Contracting Co., which installed the drywall and the woodwork.

Kirk Westall, president at Forum Manufacturing, says the wood in all the courtrooms had to come from the same log. He notes that the court-

All of the millwork was fabricated to include access for electric and data cables as well as hidden bulletproof panels for security.

rooms' clean lines give a contemporary as opposed to traditional design.

"The architectural millwork in the courtrooms and corridors is truly unique, and features sequenced, book-matched cherry panels, as well as quartered ash panels," says Nancy Kovacs, vice president at Forum Manufacturing Inc. "The grain on

the cherry panels runs vertically, while the grain on the ash runs horizontally, creating a contrast in both color and texture. The reveals between the panels in the woodwork line up with reveals in the adjacent walls. The judge's benches, as well as the low walls in front of the jury repeat this pattern."

All of the millwork was fabricated to include access for electric and data cables as well as hidden bulletproof panels for security. Although all of the courtrooms appear to be similar, the woodwork has actually been customized for each room to allow for variations in actual dimensions at the project site, Kovacs says. The pattern of contrasting panels is repeated on the entry doors to each courtroom, as well as in the corridors.

Courtroom strategically organized

The judge's bench is secured from the rest of the room in a similar manner, although the bench is large enough to seat three judges for an appeals court. Jurors are led to the jury box from a separate door that leads to the jury rooms. All parties sit in individual burgundy-colored chairs, except for the spectators, who have wooden pews. There is a large, elevated circle in the center of the courtroom ceiling that focuses activity in the heart of the room.

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"We want people to respect where they are," Weygant says, commenting on the austerity of the design.

One of the courtrooms on each floor is specially designed so that all sections are wheelchair accessible.

"The idea was total accessibility for everyone, including judges," Weygant says.

The fifth floor and part of the fourth floor consist of "shelved" space to accommodate future use. The third floor houses the prosecutor's office, civil mediation rooms and the grand jury room, which is soundproof. The prosecutor's office has an open office area with cubicles.

Domestic relations' new home

In addition to the domestic relations judges' chambers and courtrooms on the fourth floor, additional family services are located on the second floor. The second floor is the busiest of all, with juvenile probation, domestic relations, magistrate hearing rooms and public waiting areas.

The domestic relations and juvenile court division has three judges, nine magistrates, an investigative unit, a department of family court services, departments of probation and youth services, residential services, support services and fiscal management.

The magistrate rooms have windows as well as an alarm button that can alert security, and there is a voice-activated audio recording system available. The waiting areas extend to the balcony overlooking the main entrance on the first floor and the main stairway leading from the first floor to the second.

The waiting areas have metal chairs that can be cleaned easily. Some of the walls and pillars in the second floor have been spray painted with Zolatone® paint, which has a mixed textured look to it.

Also on the first floor are the clerk of courts office and other administrative offices. Each division has its own enclosed area separated by tall vertical glass walls with iron mullions, and its own entrance. Everyone who

enters the Justice Center must pass through the metal detectors.

There is a large waiting room on the first floor for people who have been called for jury duty. The jury commissioners' room is equipped with chairs, a television, a magazine rack, and a break area.

All exterior windows up to the third floor have frit, a fused material, which shields sunrays and obstructs vision from the outside. This is as provides security and comfort.

Benefits of the new center

The new justice center gives the community access to more services in one central location. The size of the space has made a variety of government functions to be easy to find, and the contemporary design and amenities make doing business easier for employees and the public alike.

Weygant, for his part, is proud of the fact that the justice center maintains the small town look and remains in the center of town. **P**

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The Power of Eminent Domain In Economic Revitalization Projects



JOHN P. SLAGTER, ESQ.

A pending U.S. Supreme Court case, *Kelo v. City of New London*, could have significant consequences for individual owners of real estate. Increasingly, cities are using the power of eminent domain to take property that is located within a redevelopment area and transfer it to a private developer.

Although the taking of private property is authorized under the United States Constitution, governmental entities may only do so if it is for a "public use." As cities become active participants in economic revitalization efforts, the nature of the debate between private rights and public needs is evolving, along with the definition of "public use."

The central issue before the U.S. Supreme Court is whether a city's condemnation of non-blighted, private property for the purpose of developing private residential and office space is a valid "public use." The increased tax revenues to be paid by the new development are seen as benefiting the public as a whole. This redefinition of "public use" strikes a sensitive nerve, particularly given that today the developers and the cities are often on the same side of a land-ownership dispute. In a typical land use takings case from earlier times, the developer would oppose the city's actions or ordinances on the grounds that they constitute an uncompensated taking

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of the developer's property rights. In the *Kelo v. City of New London* case, however, the developers are supporting the use of the government's power of eminent domain to take property from private individuals - the owners of property needed for an economic revitalization project. The common perception is that the land is really just being swapped from one private entity to another, with the government acting as a middleman.

A city's ability to take land by using the power of eminent domain arises from the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution, which states in part, "Nor shall property be taken for public use, without just compensation." The Fifth Amendment protects the right to own private property, but it also recognizes that the greater good may require the government to take private property for public use. The definition of "public use," however, has evolved over the years. Initially, takings disputes largely centered on wide-open areas needed for railroads and other public facilities.

More recently, the battleground became the urban neighborhood, where cities faced declining tax revenues as areas became "blighted" and values decreased. In 1954, this use of eminent domain was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Berman v. Parker*, where the court held that the use of eminent domain as a planning tool to eliminate "blight" was a valid public use. Cities are now further expanding their use of eminent domain to take private property that is not blighted and transfer it to private developers with the expectation that the new development will generate increased tax revenue for the city. This expanded use of eminent domain gave rise to the case currently before the Supreme Court, *Kelo v. City of New London*.

In this case, the Supreme Court will address the use of eminent domain to take property from a private individual (the homeowner) and give it to another private individual (the developer). Cities argue that the redevelopment of property, even though it is not blighted, leads to an increased tax base, which bene-

fits the public in general. Opponents argue that the practice is not about "public use," but rather about giving favorable deals to developers.

While cities generally are in favor of an expansive power of eminent domain, there is growing opposition from private citizens concerned that without sufficient restrictions on the power, anyone's property can be taken whenever a developer proposes a new use that may generate greater tax revenue. On the other hand, economic revitalization of urban areas may be severely restricted without

the use of eminent domain. Whatever the outcome by the Supreme Court, it is expected that the limits of the use of eminent domain should be established this year by this decision. **P**

Author John Slagter was interviewed by WCHV-AM in March '05 concerning his opinion on this case. Material appearing in this article is meant to provide general information only and not as a substitute for legal advice. Readers should seek the advice of their attorney or contact John P. Slagter at jslagter@bdblaw.com or 800.686.2825. This article may not be reprinted without the express permission of Buckingham, Doolittle & Burroughs, LLP © 2004.



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Northern Ohio Hold'em: The Real Deal



ALEC J. PACELLA

Settling into 2005, it seems to be an appropriate time to take a look back at the commercial real estate investment market last year as well as make a couple predictions for the rest of this year. And with the age-old game of poker being all the current rage, it may be fun to take a look at the market through the eyes of a high-stakes player.

After all, investing in real estate has many similarities to a high-stakes game. There are numerous players, some with an abundance of money and some with very little. Players raise, bluff and fold in an effort to hit the jackpot. But some just go bust.

So let's take a look at our game here in northern Ohio.

Overall, our table was busy. Last year, the overall investment sales volume was just under \$600 million and over the past three years we have averaged \$550 million. A major shift occurred between 2001 and 2002 when volume tripled. The catalyst for this dramatic jump was a consistent decrease in interest rates to historically low levels.

So with a low interest rate environment as a backdrop, just who were the players at our table and what were they up to last year?

REITs

This category includes players such as Duke Realty, Lexington Corporate Properties and Inland. As a buyer, these investors were flush with cash and among the most aggressive purchasers, provided the property fit their investment criteria.

As sellers, REITs elected to hold. Properties of note purchased by REITs last year include the 660,000-square-foot L'Oreal facility in Streetsboro for a record \$28.8 million, Chapel Hill Mall in Akron for \$78 million and Metropolitan Plaza in Highland Heights for \$19.4 million.

Local private investors

Hometown groups such as Munsell Realty, ORG Holdings and Weston are included in this category. As buyers, they were armed with historically low interest rates and the savvy that accompanies their local market knowledge, allowing this group to



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stand toe-to-toe with much large investors. As sellers, they selectively sold, seeking to take advantage of the hot market and take money off the table. Properties of note purchased by locals include La Place in Beachwood for \$25 million and two hallmark apartments properties: the 1,000-unit Gates Mills Tower for \$39 million and the 986-unit Marsol for \$42 million.

National private investors

This group includes national entrepreneurial investors such as Koll-Bren, BGK and the Carlyle Group. As buyers, these investors scoured secondary markets such as Cleveland for opportunities, as pricing in top tier markets like New York, Los Angeles and Chicago skyrocketed. As sellers, this group collectively held, primarily due to the difficulty in finding affordably priced replacement property. The only real deal of note was the purchase of the Leader Building in downtown Cleveland for \$4 million.

Pension funds/advisors

Commonly known as the institutional money, this group includes investors such as Ohio State Teachers Retirement System and Invesco. Collectively, they folded both on the buy and on the sale side. On the buy side, this group is committed to buying only in growth markets and Cleveland is not on their radar screen. On the sale side, there was a fair amount of institutional money that flowed into this marketplace in the go-go late 1990s. Pension funds typically have well defined hold periods and last year marked the end of one of those periods for many owners. Facilities sold by pension funds last year included the ProQuest building in Richfield for \$12.5 million and 3400 Gilchrist Road in Mogadore for \$8.4 million.

Tenants-In-Common (TIC)

This is a new player to the table. A modern-day equivalent to the real estate syndications of the 1980s, this group has exploded in popularity on a national scope since 2003. Three purchases last year marked the TIC's entrance into the northern Ohio

marketplace. In February, Severance Towne Center in Cleveland Heights was purchased for \$65 million. In September, the downtown office tower One Cleveland Center was purchased for \$65.5 million. And in October, the Strongsville net-leased office building, known as the Ceres building, was purchased for \$22 million. We will take a more in-depth look at TIC's in a future column but it is safe to say that we will see more activity by this group in 2005.

Now that we have taken a look back, let's take a moment to look ahead to some likely trends for this year.

1 The table will remain hot. With affordable debt, anticipated improving leasing fundamentals and more buyers than sellers, this year should mark the fourth straight year of strong activity, again topping the \$500 million mark.

2 The ante will remain high. Although pricing will not increase, it will certainly remain at very high levels, particularly for

properties leased to strong tenants on a long-term basis.

3 Few seats at the table. Expect to see more people trying to get into the northeast Ohio game, particularly the national private buyers. Elevated pricing in the top tier markets will remain, forcing many national investors to look to second-tier markets for more affordable properties.

The dealer will ultimately control the game. And by the dealer, I am specifically referring to interest rates. There seems little doubt that interest rates will increase, as evidenced by the first few months of 2005. But so long as rates do not spike and instead rise in a slow and measurable manner, expect to see little slowing in activity over the remainder of this year. **P**

Alec J. Pacella is a vice president of investment sales at Grubb & Ellis. He will be writing articles that feature various topics and aspects of real estate investment and can be reached at alec.pacella@grubb&ellis.com or 216-453-3098.



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KS Director Named Surveyor of the Year

The Cleveland chapter of the Professional Land Surveyors of Ohio (PLSO) recently honored Mark A. Yeager, P.S., director of surveying services for KS Associates, with its Surveyor of the Year award. This annual award recognizes the surveyor's technical and professional accomplishments, current professional activities, the extent to which the individual has given to the advancement of the profession and involvement in civic and community affairs.

With more than 24 years of land surveying experience, Yeager directs the KS



Mark Yeager

Associates Survey Group. Under Yeager's leadership, KS Associates has built one of Northern Ohio's largest and most accomplished survey teams.

The group is comprised of six field crews and has on its team six registered pro-

fessional surveyors.

One of the most significant KS projects directed under Yeager's supervision is the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project. The project required nearly 22,500 man-hours, making this the largest survey project in the firm's history.

Forest City to Receive National Building Museum's Honor Award

The National Building Museum recently announced that it will present its prestigious annual Honor Award for 2005 to Cleveland-based Forest City Enterprises, in recognition of the firm's long history of investment

in and revitalization of America's urban centers, growing dedication to sensitive planning and sustainable development, and vital role in creating affordable housing.

Forest City Enterprises will accept the award on June 1 at a festive black-tie gala in the National Building Museum's historic Great Hall. More than 1,000 cultural, corporate, political and building industry leaders are expected to attend, with proceeds supporting the National Building Museum's exhibitions and programs.

Bestowed annually since 1986, the National Building Museum's Honor Award recognizes out-

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standing individuals and companies who have made significant contributions in the fields of architecture, planning, construction and building.

Through its work across the county, Forest City has prided itself on community involvement and public partnerships, ensuring that new development respects local interests and cultural traditions. Valuing the importance of quality design, Forest City has worked with many recognized architects, including Frank Gehry and Renzo Piano. Forest City has also exercised leadership in making housing affordable for more Americans, incorporating substantial num-

bers of low- and moderate-income apartments and houses in projects ranging from coast to coast. The efforts of Forest City can be found across the United States in California, Colorado, Massachusetts, New York and Ohio among other locations.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2005, the National Building Museum (www.nbm.org) is a cultural institution dedicated to celebrating architecture, design, engineering, construction and planning.

Chartered by Congress in 1980, the Washington, D.C.-based museum has been open to the public since 1985.

Guardian Title Names New President

Edward Asher and the board of directors recently announced that Michael P. Maniche is back at Guardian Title and Guaranty Agency, Inc. and has been appointed president. Maniche was the president of Stewart Title Agency of Ohio Inc. for the past five years and prior to that the director of sales for Guardian Title Agency for seven years.

NAWIC Hosts 2005 Region 4 Forum in Westlake

The National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC)

Cleveland Chapter #156 will be hosting NAWIC Region 4's Annual Forum of its chapters from April 28 to May 1, 2005 at the Holiday Inn - Westlake.

Forum is an annual educational event held for all members of its region and will attract construction business professionals and tradeswomen from Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Michigan and West Virginia. There will be educational seminars and workshops for the betterment of all women in the construction industry.

Speakers include Harvey H. Alston with his personal message of "Be the Best" and Robert Uth who will detail the construction of



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NAWIC's Block Kids Building Program attracted more than 100 children from around Cleveland.

the World War II memorial in Washington D.C. Workshop speakers will be Janet Mann, vice president of finance at Cuyahoga Community College,

Carlos Figueroa, safety director of Donley's, Vince Cheverine, Esq., Tamie Taylor, NAWIC National Treasurer and Cleveland's own nationally acclaimed

speaker, trainer and five-time Emmy Award-winning broadcast journalist Connie Dieken.

Registration fee is \$150 for members, \$195 for non-members. For registration info, contact Toni Walker at Construction Employers Association (216.398.9860).


Recently, NAWIC sponsored the annual Block Kids Building Program, which attracted roughly 120 children from around Cleveland. The kids took part in a competition in which they were given a set amount of simple building tools and were encouraged to build a structure of their choosing. Construction professionals served as judges at the event.

Oster Homes Awarded for Senior Housing

Lorain-based Oster Homes has been recently recognized as among the "best of the best" in the seniors housing industry. The National Association of Home Builders presented a Silver Award to the homebuilder during the 2005 Best of Seniors Housing Awards ceremony held early this year in conjunction with the International Builders' Show in Orlando, Florida.

Oster Homes received the Silver Award in the Active Adult Community (Large) category for its "On the Boards" plans for Morningside at Martin's



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Run. Part of the largest master-planned community in Lorain County, Morningside was designed with scenic views and flexible living in mind.

Construction will begin in Spring 2005, with the first homes, main residence building and recreation center scheduled for a Fall 2005 completion.

Morningside at Martin's Run is nestled on 81 acres, bordering Lorain County Metroparks on the south and Lake Erie to the north. It offers a variety of home types including single family and villa homes, townhouses and three-story buildings with condo-style living. At the center of these housing choices, a

12,000-square-foot clubhouse will be built offering an indoor pool, fitness center, putting greens, tennis and more. Radiating out from the clubhouse is "The Grand Boulevard"—a series of walking trails, picnic areas and green spaces that connect the community.

Sponsored by the NAHB Seniors Housing Council, the Best of Seniors Housing Awards has promoted excellence in the seniors housing industry for the past 13 years.

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recently announced that it has expanded its services and has promoted several members of its team.

The firm now offers landscape architecture services, complementing current structural, mechanical, electrical and civil services.

Michael N. Stamas, has joined as a principal and director of the civil engineering and landscape architecture department, David L. Nemeth, PE was recently appointed principal and Karen A. Sherwood has been named associate.

Kidney Transplant Sparks Cleveland Poverty Project

After learning that the city of Cleveland had been designated as the poorest




(R to L) Rev. Curtis Ackley, Vicki McGaw, Mike Hansen (of Fortney & Weygandt, Inc.) and Rev. Dr. Paul Peters celebrate the donation.

city in America, Western Reserve Association of the United Church of Christ and its member churches recently established an initiative called "Beyond Band-Aids: Partnering for Poverty-Free Communities." The goal of Beyond Band-Aids is to access needs and

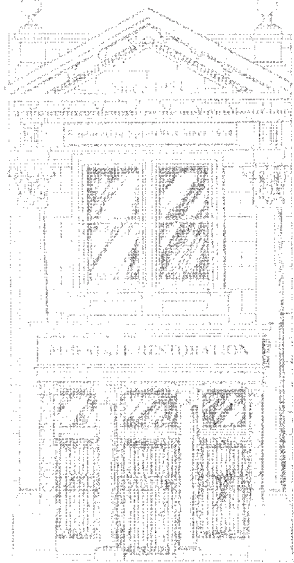
concerns with poverty in communities, and identify ways to address the issues. Their first meeting was held in early February and Fortney & Weygandt, Inc. provided a donation of over \$7,800 to assist with getting the project off the ground.

Fortney & Weygandt,

Inc.'s donation to the association was triggered from an event that occurred nearly one year ago. Bob Fortney, president of Fortney & Weygandt, Inc. was in need of a healthy kidney. Vicki McGaw, a staff member at his church, Dover Congregational United Church of Christ in Westlake, stepped up to the challenge. In February of 2004, both McGaw and Fortney went through numerous tests and surgery, which led to a successful kidney transplant. McGaw's generosity has made such an impact on Fortney's life that he wanted to make a donation to a charity in her name. She chose the Western Reserve Association.



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Governor Taft Targets Real Estate Industry

By MATT PARNELL

“Taft’s plan includes imposing a new statewide transfer tax, creating a commercial activities tax and eliminating the 10% rollback on commercial property”

The State of Ohio has come upon hard times and our elected leaders are working hard to create ways to be more competitive in attracting businesses and jobs. Governor Taft’s latest tax proposal includes provisions that put balancing the state’s budget on the backs of real estate professionals and Ohio’s property owners. His plan includes imposing a new statewide transfer tax, creating a commercial activities tax and eliminating the 10% rollback on commercial property.

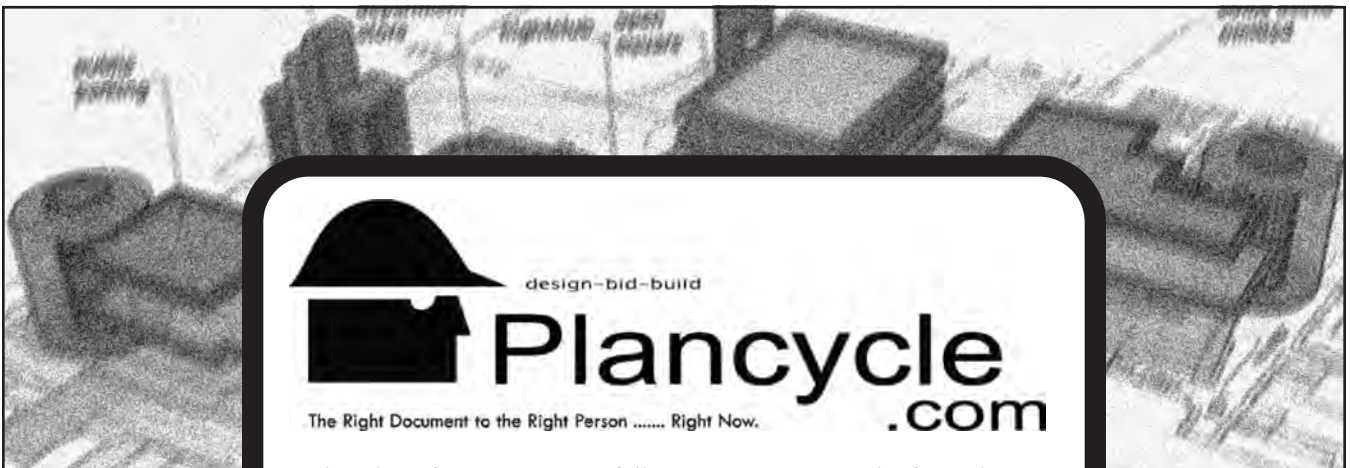
Below are brief explanations of the Governor’s proposals and the stance of Cleveland Area Board of REALTORS and Ohio Association of REALTORS.

Personal Income Tax Rate Reduction

The Governor’s proposal would help cut personal income taxes by 21% over the next five years. CABOR and OAR support the reduction of personal income tax rates. A reduction should help Ohio become more competitive and contribute to economic development and the creation of more employment opportunities.

Elimination of the Tangible Personal Property Tax

The Governor’s proposal calls for parts of the tangible personal property tax to be phased out over the next five years. Starting immediately over the next two years Ohio’s tax on machinery and equipment will be eliminated. The inventory tax will



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be phased out during the following three years. The tax currently levied on furniture and fixtures will however, remain in place.

CABOR and OAR support the elimination of the tangible personal property tax. The Ohio economy is growing slowly relative to the rest of the nation. Our state's tax system is contributing to this slow growth. High taxes on personal income and on machinery and inventory are generally viewed as the system's primary competitive disadvantages.

A Permanent 20% Cent Increase in the Sales Tax Rate

The 20% increase to the state's sales tax that was enacted on a temporary basis during the last budget is on track to expire. The Governor has proposed that it be replaced by a half penny permanent addition resulting in a 10% increase to the sales tax rate.

CABOR and OAR support a permanent _ cent increase to the sales tax rate. OAR is already on record supporting a sales tax increase as being more palatable than imposing other forms of taxation such as extending the sales tax to include real estate related services.

Statewide Transfer Tax

The revenue that would be lost as a result of tax cuts would be made up by a combination of revenue reductions and new taxes. The Governor has proposed that Ohio impose a 1 mill transfer tax, for the purpose of generating revenue for the state.

Both CABOR and OAR oppose a statewide transfer tax. Reasons for this opposition are:

1. The statewide real estate transfer tax sets a bad precedent (one mill today may be much more tomorrow).
2. Counties can already levy real estate transfer taxes up to 4 mills.
3. Increased housing costs, which makes property less affordable especially for first time homebuyers.

Elimination of the Commercial Rollback

The Governor's proposal will also eliminate the 10% rollback on commercial property taxes, currently paid by the state. Overall, the plan when fully implemented will bring

revenues into the state at a level \$800 million dollars, slightly less than what our current tax system collects. This loss is expected to be offset by continued cost containment efforts with respect to Medicaid and the resulting economic growth that is anticipated from Ohio's implementation of these broad based reforms. Both CABOR and OAR oppose the elimination of the commercial rollback. Reasons for this opposition are:

1. The immediate 10 % property tax increase, which may be impossible to accommodate.
2. Higher property taxes will result in increased expenses for commercial property owners and tenants and will contribute to a corresponding decline in commercial property values.

The Commercial Activities Tax

The most significant of the new taxes is the plan to assess a tax on gross receipts, called a "commercial activity tax." This tax will be levied at a rate of .26% on all gross receipts received by any business entity having sales in Ohio. Such a tax is problematic for the real estate industry because it does not provide for deduction of pass-through revenue that is paid in connection with cooperating brokerages, agents, referrals, etc.

For more information on these proposals and how you can contact your state legislator, visit www.ProtectingTheAmericanDream.com. **P**

Author Matt Parnell is the 2005 CABOR Chairman of the Board



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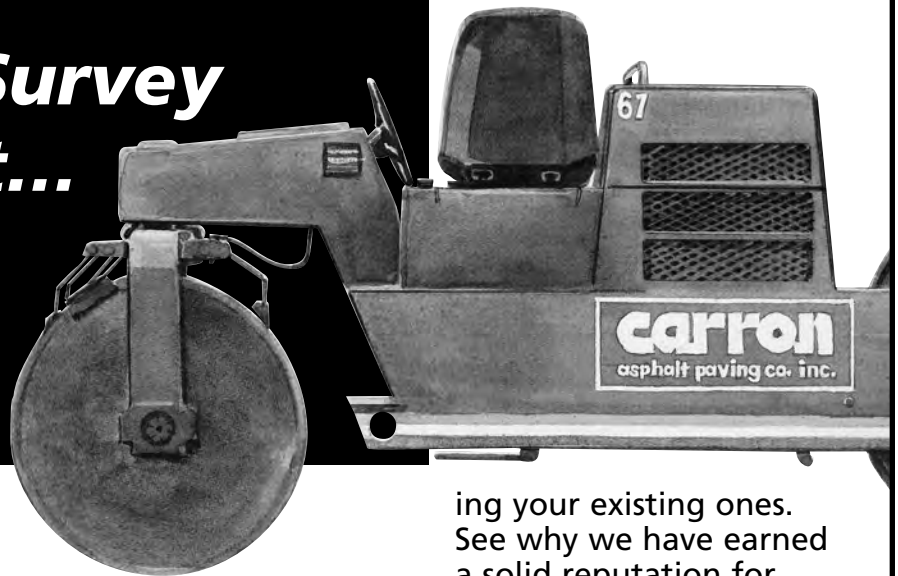
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Finding a balance

A personal perspective on property management

By Robert Petronzio

As the owner of a small commercial real estate company in northeast Ohio, I have seen many changes in how property management has been handled not only by me, but from other owners as well. Over the years, most property owners very rarely saw, let alone spoke to a tenant after the initial build-out or tenant move-in was complete. We just sat back and collected rent. Fast-forward to 2005 and how things have changed.

At least for me, property management is about balance. Not only about being able to balance the checkbook, but how to balance tenants needs and wants on a daily basis. As property managers, the only way to keep things going smoothly is to be there each and every day. Some with larger portfolios may argue that this is just not possible and that may be the case. Being in front of your customers more often than not is the key to success. Making sure you remember the date that a tenant moved in, their birthday, anniversary and such goes a long way in customer relations. How, do you ask, can you remember these things? Today's Palm Pilots, computer software, etc. can update you on a daily basis to make that phone call or stop in and see that person and celebrate that happy moment with them.

We are very hands on when it comes to customer service. We hang pictures, move desks and run a new phone or computer line for a new or old tenant. We open the door for them, carry in office supplies and just have a very thankful approach that we have tenants to serve. When we promise them something, we deliver. When they need something, we get it.

Many property owners who are sitting back and collecting rent are collecting less and less. We, as a society, want service. Service from

McDonalds, Sears, Home Depot and the like. When we do not get service, we become impatient and opt to make moves or decisions based upon what type of service we received. Tenants act the same way.

When it takes a landlord three or four phone calls from a tenant to repair a malfunctioning door, a leak in the roof or exterior lighting that does not go on at dusk, relations will sour.

The idea that "an ounce of prevention is a pound of cure" is true and

the concept plays a very large role in keeping up to the times.

As a property manager, preventative maintenance is a key role in keeping properties up to today's standard. New roofs, new HVAC equipment, carpet, painting, parking lot repairs, seal coating, landscaping and other improvements go a long way. You must reinvest capital in order to keep maintenance on overdue items to a minimum.

I have always approached our sites by asking myself, "Would I lease

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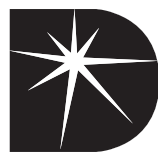
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there?" or "Do I like the building, location, surroundings, other tenants within the building, signage, exterior colors, trash bin location and so on?" I approach the interior suites as to the cleanliness of the suite, the ceiling, lights, walls, carpet and all else. Does the owner care about what goes on, on a day-to-day basis, with the property. Is there garbage on the lot, in the flowerbeds or in common areas? Does the snow get plowed and shoveled? Does the grass get cut and weeds sprayed?

Most tenants now look for these things and expect them from the owner. Why shouldn't they? Their place of business becomes a second home if not a first to them. We would expect this and do. By taking this approach, we believe that we stay one step ahead of the property owner collecting rent only.

I took over the reins of our company in 1987. I was a green as a spring lawn. I was young and impressionable and allowed myself the

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opportunity to learn by getting dirty. I looked at occupancy rates and knew that things had to get better. We needed tenants and tenants who would stay with us. I knew that they would only stay if I gave them a reason to do so. My approach was to approach each site and start by looking at things I did not like and changing them as time and money allowed. I was flexible with build-outs for new tenants and looked at the overall picture versus that day. I learned to be creative on rent structures, slow periods for tenants, step-up rents and creative reimbursement to us for tenant improvements.

By being open minded and creative, the relationship with that new or old tenant became stronger. They knew what I was thinking and I knew what they were thinking. The relationship prospered and it was no longer a landlord/tenant relationship. It was one of respect, friendship and an overall "if they succeed, we succeed" mentality.

A tenant should not be intimidated to call the owner or property manager if they have a question or problem. I am confident that my tenants do not feel intimidated or apprehensive to pick up the phone to ask a question or report a problem. Over time, the effort has paid off tenfold. We now maintain a 94%



overall occupancy on 15 different commercial sites ranging from retail, office and self-storage to office warehouse and medical. The tide has turned.

Tenants that do due diligence on us find that as property managers we respond and act on every facet of the business. Going the extra step to get things done is our main goal and objective. Getting them done now is our attitude. The reputation that we have achieved is a long time in coming but now pays off in far greater rewards.

A close friend who was in the residential home building business always told me that he had never gone to work a day in his life. He loved what he did and it showed. Several years ago when he told me that, I looked myself in the mirror and realized that I too did not go to work. I love what I do and it radiates to our tenants and the relationship with them. **P**

Robert Petronzio is principal of Petronzio Management Company, LLC, which is located in Chesterland. More info on the firm can be found at www.pmcleasing.com or call 440.729.8200.



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How Did the Construction Project Go Over Budget?

Examining trouble spots in cost planning

By Barbara Hajes

If you have ever planned a renovation or expansion project you have been faced with this issue. It doesn't matter if it is for a tenant, a company department in your facility

or your own property, you're hit what that uneasy feeling and you ask yourself: how did the project go over budget?

You might say the solution is "better planning." That response is too simple. There are numerous fac-

tors that contribute to that bottom line. How the project is budgeted is a big factor.

Here are some areas outlined that may contribute to the over-budget experience. Korfant & Mazzone has faced these issues when determining project budget for our clients and tenants.

We want to share some of those factors that can add up and are not always included in the planned budget.

Who is establishing the initial budget?

Depending on who authors the budget will influence what is included or what may be left out. The architect may not include the contractor's profit on the project. A



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general contractor may underestimate design fees.

How much are you willing to pay for the architectural and engineering fees?

If you don't want to pay upfront for necessary architectural and engineering documents, getting by with the minimum city requirements just won't do. You will be missing information that is valuable in the field. If you don't have the details on the drawings, you start to open up those areas for interpretation. Extra charges result because the details were not clearly defined before the start of the project.

Add in lost time, delays in discussing how details are to be handled and the project starts to be delayed, which causes additional costs for many of the trades.

You may end up ramming last minute decisions through which could cost even more in the end.

Did you include all the general conditions?

Frequently not all the general conditions are included. If something is left out, it either ends up absorbed unwillingly in the project or becomes a change order.

What if you left something out? A change order for another area becomes inflated to make up the loss of a general condition item?

You could end up frustrated with extra costs and lots of questions.

Some forgotten conditions might include the following (and there are others): floor and wall protection? Scaffolding and how much do you need? Removing doors and windows to get items in and out? Elevator or dock access?

Do you have to pay for an attendant or security personnel? Parking costs? Changing locks and keys? How far do the contractors need to travel with tools and equipment to reach the project?

We all know time is money and the contractors will need to put that into their costs to do the project. If you need a list to assist you with this planning, call us.

Does the budget reflect a cost or profit for professional services?

The construction manager, general contractor, project manager or the architect will run the project. There are costs for administrative services to larger projects and that need to be included such as accounting, the paper management, etc.

Are you listening to the decision-maker (client/tenant/owner)?

At the first meetings, the decision maker (the one approving the budget or paying the bill) is the one who will reveal what is important and what they are willing to pay. Prepare a list of questions! Be realistic and be firm with questions. The worst thing to do is to start throwing out costs without knowing exactly what is desired or affordable. The people paying for the project will remember the figure and it will haunt you at the end of the job. We paper-trail the project with meetings, memos and questions in writing.

Were all decisions made upfront?

There is something to be said for Martha Stewart: detail, detail, detail. The more detail and the more infor-

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mation you have for your construction team the better off you are. That means clean quotations from contractors for each trade. Instead of pushing the project forward to “get started,” all trades should know their scope of work. They also need to know what the other trades are doing so there is no confusion and/or overlap.

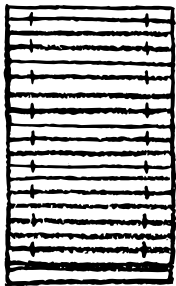
Did all parties do their homework?

Find out if everyone has actually read the scope of work and understands it. If you haven’t experienced this already, people don’t read thoroughly drawings or scope of work. Contractors have been guilty of sending personnel to the job without early instructions. Don’t assume they know. Ask!

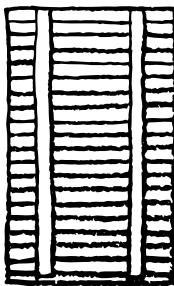
Is the decision-making causing delays?

Don’t let your architect sit on making a decision, even on small issues. Often construction is like

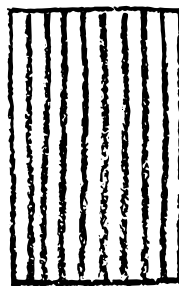
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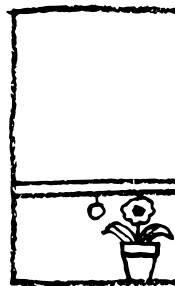
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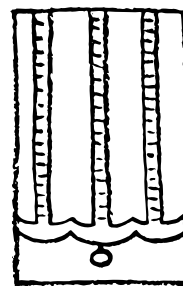
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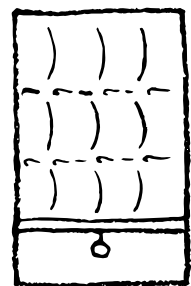
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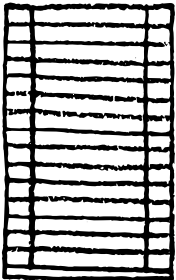
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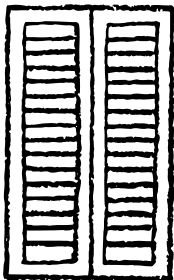
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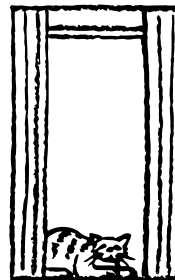
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building a block castle. If the block below needs a decision and it delays a detail or decision, it may be costly to work around it. Oftentimes it results in other issues later that cost money due to time delays. It can anger the already impatient people ready to move in.

Are the drawings as helpful as possible?

Get as much of the questionable info on the drawings before you start construction. Some contractors are excellent. If you give drawings to your trusted trades early, they can find pitfalls before you fall into them at the job.

Are you over-relying on change orders?

Don't rely on change orders to solve all the field problems. If many decisions are made early on, change orders will be reduced thus reducing

extras costs. When you give that final budget cost to the person who needs to approve it, they are not thinking change orders. They are hanging onto that figure you provided before the job started.

Do you have the same interpretation of the job?

If you ask various contractors to give you feedback with costs, are you getting the same information with their price? Even if you provide drawings, this gets interpreted differently. More importantly, before the project starts, does each trade understand the scope of work expected and do the decision-makers (owner or tenant) know what they are paying for?

Are you forcing costs to meet a preconceived budget number?

You may estimate the project and are told it costs too much. Then you

have to make it work. You go along with this and you keep the budget lean. You may be faced with change orders or other conditions down the line. You may even end up with the original cost you proposed in the beginning.

Then you are asked: Why did the project go over budget?

Have you allowed for problems in your budget?

Build in labor time for problems. Very few of us do this because it is called "fat in the job." We know you try to keep the job "cost effective," but have you ever heard of a job that ran without one glitch?

If the workspace will be occupied, have you factored in delays?

Occupied areas cost more. You usually move furniture and/or equipment back and forth and you are working around people. The job

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You need to consider the cost to secure materials, equipment and tools left at the site.

What about the chances of freight and delivery damage?

Sometimes you'll be faced with freight and delivery damage.

You work hard to get equipment to the site on time. It comes in damaged. It creates more labor time for moving equipment both in and out. It also costs the supervisor time to correct the problem.

Unfortunately, this cannot be predicted.

What about other unforeseen conditions?

When working in older structures, there is no way to get around these issues unless you are allowed to knock holes in walls or ceilings to look inside. Even then, you cannot see everything.

Underground conditions can be scary too. Even if the ground is tested for basements prior to construction, the actual spots tested may not hit previous underground conditions.

The decision-maker approving the budget absolutely needs to understand this upfront.

Has this hit on some of your experiences? With these points in mind, your next project may be right on budget (or hopefully below).

And then you won't get asked: "Why did the project go over budget?" **P**

Barbara Hajes is director of marketing for Korfant & Mazzone, Inc., a construction manager and general contractor for commercial and industrial properties that provides services for smaller jobs as well as larger projects. Korfant & Mazzone owns several commercial properties within the greater Cleveland area.

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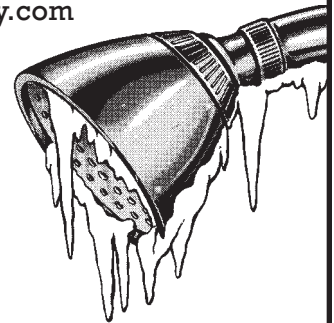


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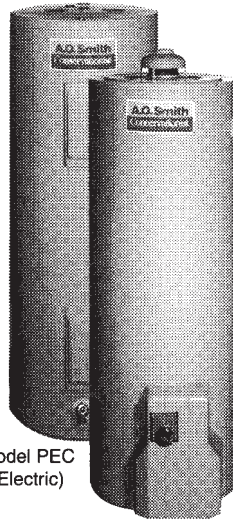


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Window Cleaning Experts Join Forces, Start New Business

By Jeanne Bluffstone

Jamie Byrne and David Stearns have joined forces and taken their experience in window cleaning to a new dimension. After knowing each other as professionals in the windowcleaning arena for many years, the two combined their backgrounds and knowledge and on April 1 opened Cardinal Window Cleaning Company, a Cleveland-based window cleaning and glass restoration service for commercial and high-rise buildings.

Building on experience

Byrne, who is also president of Cuyahoga Siding Windows & Gutters, has 16 years of experience in high-end residential and small commercial business window cleaning, and has customers from Norwalk to the Pennsylvania state line. His background is the perfect springboard for the new business.

In addition to serving residences in the Chagrin Valley, Moreland Hills, Beachwood and Pepper Pike areas, Cuyahoga Siding Windows &

Gutters provides windowcleaning services for multi-location stores such as Blockbuster Video, Disney Stores, the GAP and Banana Republic.

Always very discrete when referring to his residential customers, Byrne says his business has grown dramatically through repeat business and referrals.

"Satisfaction is guaranteed and good customers seem to stay with us," he says.

Stearns is vice president of Cardinal Window Cleaning Company and brings a big business background and expertise in glass restoration to the new endeavor.

His experience is focused in the area of large volume window cleaning services for corporations and high-rise buildings.

Stearns spent nearly 10 years in commercial window cleaning and glass restoration services, an area that requires specialized knowledge, techniques and equipment.

Spreading across the city from east and west Greater Cleveland suburbs - Byrne in Willoughby Hills and

Stearns in Bay Village - the two partners bring a depth and breadth of experience to Cardinal Window Cleaning through diverse expertise in the same business.

"In Cardinal Window Cleaning Company, we unite our wisdom and experience in an entirely new way in order to provide a completely new service to companies in this area," Stearns says.

Window cleaning and glass restoration experts

Cardinal Window Cleaning Co. is primarily a contract window cleaning company and at this point is focusing its efforts on the Cleveland/Akron market, Stearns says.

In addition to providing superior window cleaning services, Cardinal Window is a specialist in reflective glass restoration and utilizes a proprietary process with equipment and techniques designed expressly to enhance and restore the original



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glass without impairing the reflective finish.

“Reflective glass is important to the climate control of a building,” he says. “But, if reflective glass is stained, and it does tend to stain as it ages, it loses its reflective property and therefore its ability to hold in heat in the winter and air conditioning in the summer.

Cleaning reflective glass requires specialized methods, however, and few companies know how to do that.

“We also have proprietary equipment which enables us to do the cleaning without harming the tinting.”

Training and a focus on safety ensure customer satisfaction

Cardinal is focused on safety, which also enhances customer satisfaction.

To that end, the company has instituted a program of ongoing training, monthly training meetings and quarterly certifications.

“Our primary focus is to create and maintain a safe working environment, not just for our people, but for our customers and the people around us,” Stearns says.

Cardinal is a member of IWCA (the International Window Cleaning Association) and adheres to its I-14 standards, safety standards.

“Building managers and owners appreciate our focus on safety since they are the entity that would be most affected by unsafe practices,” he says.

Satisfaction guaranteed

“With our company, satisfaction is guaranteed,” Stearns says. “If there is ever a time that a customer is not satisfied with our service, we don’t stop until their satisfaction is reached.

“It’s never acceptable for a customer to be unhappy with the service they received. It’s just not an option.” **P**

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Industry Profile: Community Association Underwriters of America, Inc.

By Jeanne Bluffstone

Community Association Underwriters of America, Inc. (CAU) understands that community associations have unique insurance needs. Meeting those needs is at the heart of its business.

Established 15 years ago to specifically serve the niche market of community associations, CAU has earned a reputation as one of the leaders in association insurance protection.

In the United States alone, they provide insurance for thousands of associations with hundreds of thousands of units in 29 states.

"At CAU we do only one thing - we provide insurance coverage to community associations: condo associations, homeowner associations, office condo associations and co-op associations," says Charles (Chip) Nail, regional marketing director for

Northeast Ohio and eastern Pennsylvania.

"We know we are different," Nail says. "We are specialists in what we do."

CAU is a managing general agency (MGA). The CAU program is written through QBE Insurance Corporation. As one of the top 25 insurance organizations in the world, QBE carries a financial strength rating of A (excellent) from A.M. Best and an S&P rating of A+.

As the managing general agency, CAU handles all aspects of the program. This includes sales, marketing, underwriting, claims handling, and accounting.

Expansive coverage and service

CAU's policies offer broader coverage than many of its competitors. The policies include coverages that are either expansive options or

unavailable through other companies. These expanded coverages include:

1 *True guaranteed replacement cost on property.* In other words, the limit of insurance is guaranteed replacement cost. As such, coverage can never be less than 100% of what it costs to repair or replace damaged property.

2 *Environmental impairment liability coverage.* This applies to newly discovered pollution conditions and coverage bodily injury, third party property damage (including loss of use and diminished market value), remediation expense, and defense costs. Many other companies exclude this type of pollution coverage, but CAU includes it in its program.

3 *No aggregate limit on its general liability coverage (an aggregate limit is the most the policy will pay for liability*

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claims in any one policy year). No aggregate limit assures policyholders that the full general liability occur-

rence limit for all covered claims will be available during the policy year.

4 Directors and officers coverage that includes defense cost coverage for non-monetary claims and claims of discrimination against an association's board of directors. Some other policies may not include this important enhancement to directors and offers coverage.



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CAU's service is also unusual, Nail says. CAU has local representatives who will personally meet with boards, explain its coverages, and take insurance applications. Associations rarely experience this type and depth of service, he says.

"This is another way that we differentiate ourselves and it works to the advantage of our insureds," Nail says.

When it comes to insurance, community associations want guidance. CAU agents possess years of experience in servicing the insurance needs of community associations and thus are well suited to provide such guidance.

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“Although there are similarities among community associations, each is unique with very different situations and concerns,” Nail says. “For those who meet our underwriting guidelines, we can tailor a program to address its individual needs.”

In addition to basic property and liability coverages, CAU offers coverage for:

- Employee dishonesty (fidelity)
- Directors & officers liability
- Commercial auto
- Equipment & machinery
- Workers compensation

Specific package policy enhancements include:

- Guaranteed replacement cost for all buildings and structures
- Building ordinance coverage

- Sewer backup
- Liability with no general aggregate
- Directors & officers liability for non-money damages
- Employee dishonesty and directors & officers liability for property managers and firms

“Our customers range from large to very small associations - garden style to high-rises,” Nail says.

Because CAU professionals also act as insurance advisors to its policyholders, they are available to meet with boards and attend association meetings when questions arise that require the advice of an insurance expert.

Catastrophic coverage

Catastrophes can impose a tremendous financial burden on community associations that have inadequate coverage. Such tragedies

dramatically illuminate the necessity for broad insurance protection.

Vast experience in the community association insurance arena

“We have never tried to be everything to everyone,” Nail says. “We are specialists and we are very clear in our objectives - to serve a narrow market and serve it well. Because we are very different, we stand apart from other companies in the insurance industry.”

CAU’s dedication to providing the best possible service and its commitment to quality ensures complete reliability in handling important transactions, rapid resolution of claims, prompt policy service and efficient billing procedures.

With extensive experience in this unique insurance discipline, each of CAU’s agents is highly knowledgeable in the complexities of risk evaluation, underwriting and claims management specific to community

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associations. The agent's experience in these specially designed coverages is a critical component in CAU's ability to meet the unique needs of community associations.

CAU's close association with boards, property managers, industry research groups, legal and financial specialists, trade organizations and construction firms provides a comprehensive nationwide network focused on the coverage and claims issues facing community associations.

An ongoing commitment to research and education enables CAU to offer innovative new coverages, such as the protection for real estate property managers under the association's directors and officers liability coverage.

Further, its experience and knowledge enables CAU to act quickly to harmful emerging trends and new loss exposures with prompt, cost-effective implementation of additional coverages.

One of the most important responsibilities of a community association board of directors and its property manager is to secure the protection of the best insurance program possible.

Because it is its only business, CAU knows the community association market. I

n light of this, they are able to provide more comprehensive coverage and more responsive service than most.

"We will be happy to review your association's insurance coverage today," Nail says. "We can also supply a free insurance survey so board members and/or property managers can compare its president coverage with CAU."

CAU is a member of National CAI (Community Association Institute) and some of its employees are on the national faculty. **P**

To learn more about CAU, please contact Chip Nail at 800-228-1930 x 7175, e-mail cnail@cauinsure.com, or feel free to visit www.cauinsure.com.



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Support for Growth

An introduction to the International Facility Management Association

By Barbara Hajes

As a facility professional, you are invited to participate in a worldwide organization of facility management professionals: International Facility Management Association, known as IFMA.

IFMA is the largest and most widely recognized professional association for facility management, supporting approximately 17,300 members. The Association's members are represented in 126 chapters, 16 councils and one special interest group (SIG) in 54 countries worldwide. Globally, IFMA certifies facility managers, conducts research, provides educational programs, recognizes facility management degree and certificate programs and produces World Work Place, the largest

facility management-related conference and exposition.

IFMA's Northern Ohio chapter meets monthly, provides an opportunity to discuss personal development, critical timely issues, educational courses and networking through our meetings and events. This year, association members have toured the CSU Convocation Center and Progressive Insurance Company's new facilities. Future meetings will include the Cleveland Plain Dealer Building and Senator Oliver Ocasek Building in Akron. A complete list of upcoming meetings can be found online at ifmanorthernohio.org.

IFMA, both on a local level as well as an international level, provides resources to its membership through websites, newsletters, directories,

phone conferences and referral services to enhance career growth and facility related industry knowledge. Its monthly newsletter keeps local membership abreast of what is happening in the Northern Ohio Chapter, while IFMA regularly sends e-mail notification of what is happening on a national level or international level.

IFMA has a professional certification program online and at a local level, offering certificates as a FMP (Facility Management Professional) or CFM (Certified Facility Manager) to enhance career development. It arranges training classes and materials for local membership to assist them prior to taking the certification test.

IFMA's annual golf outing held in August each year and a holiday party

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held in December are two additional ways members enjoy membership.

Community service is another area in which the association provides support to the local area. This year, it will participate in the annual "Clean the Ohio Canal" day in The National Park in Valley View with members' families and friends. The group is also supporting the Applewood Centers' "Apple Day" festival in September. As a local organization, IFMA's Northern Ohio chapter invites friends and encourages members to bring their families to these festivities.

The local chapter encourages participation by facility and facility related professionals to share knowledge and expertise with others members and associates. **P**

More info on the Northern Ohio chapter of the International Facilities Management Association can be found by visiting www.ifmanorthernohio.org, calling 440-892-7620 or e-mailing ohioifma@comcast.net.



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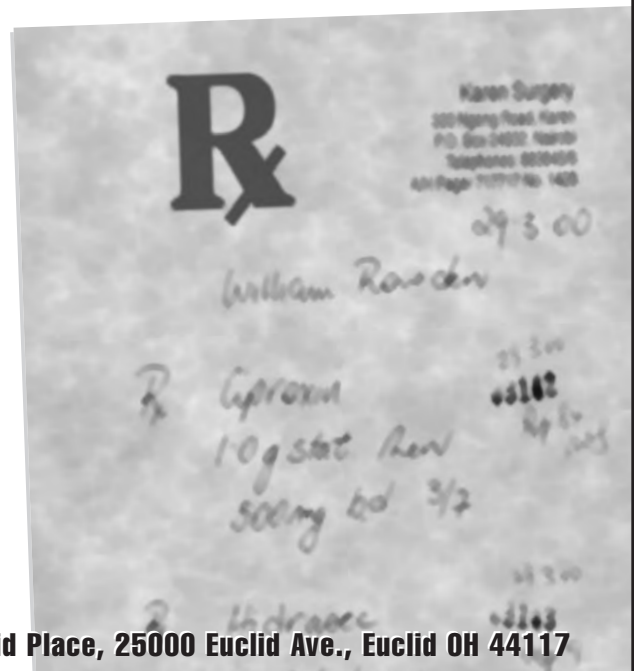
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Best Leasing Practices to Close the Gap Between Vacancies and Signed Leases

By Justin Cherry and Lisa Trosien

Prospective residents are more sophisticated and knowledgeable than ever before. This, coupled with the fact that the rental market remains soft throughout the region and nationally, has created a more challenging sales process for the leasing agent.

As a result, leasing professionals and their communities have had to become more competitive than ever.

One response to this demand has been to offer concessions such as free rent or reduced security deposits as a means to attract residents. But in reality the success of the leasing agent relies on far more than a \$99 move-in special.

What follows are some of today's best leasing practices to help close the gap between vacancies and signed leases:

Communicate what is most important.

Whether you speak to the prospective resident in person or over the telephone, examine how you communicate why your community is a desirable place to live. Don't accentuate the obvious. Emphasize those aspects that really let your community stand apart from the competition. One of the keys to being successful is to sell yourself. People can go anywhere to lease an apartment, but they cannot go just anywhere to lease an apartment and have you as their leasing professional.

Look for amenities that boost the attractiveness of your property.

These days, you need more than a swimming pool, covered parking and a fitness center to close the deal.



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Analyze your product and market and "sell the sizzle" about what differentiates your property from the competition. For example, do your units feature larger eat-in kitchens, better appliances, and access to transportation?

Do your two-bedroom units come with one or two bathrooms?

Does your community offer WiFi (wireless Internet connection) in its common areas?

Do you accept credit cards for rental payments?

Do you offer a security deposit alternative that allows residents to lower their move-in costs without making concessions that will impact your bottom line?

Ask the right questions.

To sell your community most effectively, ask the prospective resident the right questions to assess their needs.

Then listen carefully to his answers so you can tailor your communications to address them.

Don't deliver an off-the-shelf monologue about your property that has little relevance to your prospect.

If your property does not offer what the resident is looking for, refer them to a sister property that does.

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Make sure you and your agents are completely familiar with local, state and federal Fair Housing standards and provide a level playing field for prospective residents so there is no form of discrimination. Attend Fair Housing training at least once a year

Get comfortable with technology.

These days, leasing professionals must be computer literate as the industry moves in the direction of providing bundled property management and other software. For example, property management software is now being bundled with such services as credit screening, accounting and other ancillary services - all available at the desktop level.

Leverage technology for better compliance.

Emerging technology today allows property managers to screen prospective residents and access a great deal

of information online such as credit scores and background checks.

Not only can this information better help you comply with Fair Housing laws, it can be very helpful in protecting your leasing criteria, something particularly important in softer real estate markets.

Rely on this technology to help you fill vacancies with people that have the ability to pay the rent and that have affirmative prior rental experience.

Stay on top of your email.

Today's leasing professional needs to be well versed in use of the Internet.

Check your community's email hourly and send back professional and articulate responses to emailed requests for community information in a timely manner.

With as many as 50% of today's emailed inquiries from prospects going unanswered, answering your email in a prompt fashion underscores your professionalism and lets



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your prospect know that you would be attentive to their needs should they rent at your community.

Remember that closing is a process, not an event. It is a process that entails being professional, cour-

teous and knowledgeable. It's not just a question you ask at the end of the presentation.

Closing begins with your appearance when you arrive for work and your attitude for the day.

No property manager can afford to have a bad day because we are in the people business!

Every prospective resident phone call should be closed by trying to set an appointment.

Every qualified prospective resident who visits your community should be offered the opportunity to lease an apartment. **P**

Justin Cherry is a regional marketing director for SureDeposit. With more than one million units in nearly 3,300 communities under agreement, SureDeposit (www.suredeposit.com) is the nation's leading alternative to traditional security deposits. Lisa Trosien is a multifamily educator and consultant with 24 years of industry experience. She can be reached at Lisa@apartmentexpert.com.

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Updated info on important projects in the region

NAME Union Training Center
LOCATION Parma, OH – Cuyahoga County – Corporate Drive
OWNER/BLDR Geis Companies – 10020 Aurora Hudson Road – Streetsboro, OH 44241
 330-528-3500 – Scott Wangler
ARCHITECT Murfin Associates – 389 Boston Mills Road – Hudson, OH 44236
 330-653-2072 – Jim Murfin

DESCRIPTION One Building – 49,000 sq ft
STATUS Waiting for Site Approvals
NAME View Pointe Ridge Office & Townhomes \$5,000,000
LOCATION Parma, OH – Cuyahoga County – Ridge & Pearls Roads
OWNER View Pointe Ridge Development Corporation – 6612 Southington Drive

Parma, OH 44129 – 440-884-7999 – Dan Hopkins
ARCHITECT Michael Augoustidis Architects – 2401 Superior via Bsmt – Cleveland, OH 44113
 216-241-7662 – Michael Augoustidis
DESCRIPTION 16 Townhomes – 7000 sq ft retail building
STATUS Plans in Progress

NAME Health Center/Boardman Hospital \$43,000,000
LOCATION Youngstown, OH – Mahoning County – Market Street
OWNER St Elizabeth Health Center – 1044 Belmont Avenue – Youngstown, OH 44504
 330-746-7211 – Wayne Tennant
ARCHITECT Strollo Architects – 20 federal Plaza W – Youngstown, OH 44504
 330-743-1177 – Greg Strollo
ARCHITECT Moody/Nolan Ltd – 300 Spruce Street – Columbus, OH 43215
 614-461-4664 – Dan Delk
DESCRIPTION One Building - 6 Stories – 200,000 sq ft
STATUS Early Planning Stages

NAME Cedar Center Retail Program
LOCATION University Heights, OH – Cuyahoga County – Cedar & Warrensville
OWNER/DVLP The Coral Company – 24400 chagrin Boulevard – Beachwood, OH 44122
 216-765-8822 – Alexis Booth
ARCHITECT Herschman Architects – 23625 Commerce Park – Cleveland, OH 44122



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CONST/MGR Marous Brothers Construction --
1702 Joseph Lloyd Parkway –
Willoughby, OH
44094 – 440-951-3904 – Ryan
Bodine

DESCRIPTION One Building – 1 story – 75,000 sq ft
STATUS Final Plans underway

NAME Massillon Senior Housing
LOCATION Massillon, OH – Stark County –
Glenwood Street SE

OWNER Tri-County Partnership Corporation
– 248 Erie Street – Massillon, OH
44646
330-837-7676 – Gayle Gamble

ARCHITECT Plans by Owner
GEN/CONTR Smith Development Corporation –
6501 High Mill NW – Massillon, OH
44646
330-832-1040 – Steve Smith

DESCRIPTION Five Buildings – 1 Story – 27,000 sq ft
STATUS In Design

NAME Diamond Center Shopping Center
LOCATION Mentor, OH – Lake County – Heisley
road

OWNER/BLDR United Commercial Property Group
– Solon, OH 44139 – 440-542-0300
Mark Escaja

ARCHITECT Plans by Owner/Bldr

DESCRIPTION 400,000 sq ft

STATUS Very Early proposal + Rezoning

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