

Firm building hub of industrial activity

BY DAVID PARKER, CALGARY HERALD SEPTEMBER 30, 2010



Throughout the slowdown that other sectors had to struggle through over the past couple of years, our industrial real estate sector still fared fairly well. And it has been the first to attract new business, especially in serving the transportation industry.

It's 15 years since I left the former Calgary Economic Development Authority and during my time there, its focus was on promoting Calgary as a transportation hub. Thanks largely to key air cargo infrastructure, rail intermodals and an abundance of truck transportation facilities, this city has become a huge distribution centre with millions of square feet of warehouse space. We have attracted many new companies and investors and another new industrial park is being built just outside the southeast city limits in Rocky View County on 100th Street S.E. north of Glenmore Trail.

Wesview Industrial Park is a project by Wesgroup, a respected Vancouver-based company that has built more than 2.5 million square feet of industrial real estate in the Greater Vancouver area and owns enough land there to double that figure.

The company is being represented by Shawn Kenny, who worked here with Melton, Colliers, Avison Young and Sun Life prior to joining Bentall as vice-president of acquisitions. In May of last year, he moved to Vancouver and opened his own consulting company, Galway Real Estate Advisors, and has enjoyed a relationship with Wesview ever since.

Kenny's frequent visits back to Calgary are to help the company sell the 18 parcels of land in the 41-net-hectare park, Wesview's first major project in Alberta. Lots range from one hectare to more than 16 hectares, and Kenny says that a big bonus for transportation users and manufacturers is that the county's guidelines allow for small buildings and large yards.

His first sale was to Rosenau Transport, which has its main Calgary office and cross-dock facility along Wrangler Road on adjacent land to the south of the new development. Rosenau Transport and Acropolis Warehousing have begun construction on a 56,500-square-foot structure that will see a total of 140,000 square feet of new buildings after completion of all its Wesview phases.

Kenny says he already has two other conditional sales and interest shown in more land than he has available.

Location is a big factor as 100th Street is classed as a high-load corridor that will connect Glenmore

Trail north to Country Hills Boulevard, linking in to the QEII to Edmonton and Fort McMurray as well as providing easy access to the Trans-Canada, Stoney Trail ring road and Highway 2 to the western United States and Mexico.

Wesview Industrial Park will also offer some attractive surroundings. Its off -site stormwater pond will maximize lot efficiency and flow into a large, existing wetlands area.

Today, along the banks of the St. Lawrence River in Quebec City, a large Joe Fafard sculpture of eight horses will be unveiled as a tribute to that city's 400th anniversary and to the close sister-city arrangement that exists between it and the City of Calgary.

Past-president of the Stampede and CEO of West Canadian George Brookman tells me it's one of a series of sculptures, which are a result of conversations he had with the public art committee of the Stampede.

The first piece, Outlaw, was unveiled at Fifth Avenue Place last May. An identical sculpture to the Quebec City horses -- which are 125 per cent of life size -- is to be unveiled next Monday at Stampede Park prior to its final installation in the new park under construction to the east of the new Calgary Courts Centre. The two magnifi-cent works were funded by the City of Calgary, the Calgary Stampede, Penn West Energy and the Bill Siebens family.

Law firm Ogilvy Renault opened its Calgary office earlier this year in the Le Germain tower to help serve its clients where energy deals are being made and to leverage its existing services across the firm that has other offices in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec City and in London.

It recently announced the addition of three new Calgary associates: Aimee Halfyard, financial services and general corporate and commercial matters; Matthew Hall, concentrating on securities, mergers and acquisitions; and Chris Harris, who focuses on energy-related matters.

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