

Opus finds good fit for office tenants

BY DAVID PARKER, FOR THE CALGARY HERALD JANUARY 26, 2012

Presented By:



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Photograph by: Dean Bicknell, Calgary Herald

It has already been eight months since Chris Ollenberger accepted the position of executive vice-president of Opus Corp. after leaving the Calgary Municipal Land Corp., so I took the opportunity to pay him a visit to see how he was fitting in.

It was an exciting hour listening to Ollenberger, Opus president Hannes Kovac and new manager of leasing and marketing, Angela Hill, as they outlined some of the 20 million square feet of industrial, commercial and retail development under the company umbrella.

I was particularly interested in their progress in the leasing of and building out of 90 per cent of the interiors of the nearly completed Atlantic Avenue Art Block. Opus was asked by the owner to find tenants and the 160,000 square feet of rentable office and retail space is virtually all leased.

Kasian Architecture will move into a full floor in March and Critical Mass will move into its floor in April. Other major office tenants are Pattison Outdoor and Terralog Technologies; retailers include Limitless Furniture, Espy Fashion Boutique, Gravity Coffee, Little Rock Document Services, Bite Groceteria and an Italian restaurant.

Ollenberger was also keen to show me plans for Britannia Crossing, a five-storey mixed-use boutique commercial development that is to be built along Elbow Drive at the corner of 50th Avenue S.W.

The design by Gibbs Gage Architects shows an imposing structure with 48,000 square feet of office space and 18,000 square feet of available retail along the high exposure strip in one of Calgary's most prestigious communities.

Kovac says he intends to relocate the Opus office into the top floor when construction is completed in spring .

Two other major developments that are keeping Ollenberger and his team busy are in Royal Vista and Royal Oak Park in the northwest sector of the city.

Two buildings totalling 63,000 square feet are under construction for Prime Funds offering a two-storey retail and office building plus dedicated retail pads.

And for Certus Developments, eight buildings fully leased to the likes of Shoppers Drug Mart, TD Bank and Oasis Spa are being built on a 10-acre parcel between Royal Vista and Royal Oak Shopping Centre. The total space of 140,000 square feet includes a 42,000-square-foot building dedicated to medical/professional services.

Pre-leasing is also underway on a joint venture project with a private land owner that will see a 68,000 square foot, four-storey retail/office building available for lease on Bonaventure Drive S.E. immediately north of the Carriage House Inn. And on the prominent corner of downtown Airdrie at Centre Avenue and Main Street, Opus is building a single-storey building called Main Street Place that will house AIR 106.1 Radio as well as medical services.

Ollenberger will also be spending some of his time in Edmonton, where Opus is building a 52,000squarefoot office block, fully leased to Magna IV Engineering.

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The Calgary Convention Centre Authority has appointed two new members to its board. Sam Goreshts, Cameo Investments, and George Brookman of West Canadian Industries Group, will serve under the new board chairman, Bob Holmes.

And on the staff side Rhonda Woolverton has assumed the newly created position of sales manager - Calgary, working with the local community to generate leads for conventions and major meetings. Shannon Della Valle, who joined the Telus Convention Centre staff this week after sales and marketing experience with CrossIron Mills, Tourism Calgary and the Fairmont Palliser, has taken over Woolverton's previous position responsible for sales to corporate Canada.

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When I wrote about the plans to improve the space of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra library in the basement of Jack Singer Concert Hall thanks to a donation by Paul and Margaret Boeda, I made mention of a rare find on its shelves of an original vocal score of Don Giovanni. Only six other copies are known in the world, so no doubt it will draw a lot of attention when it goes on display in the foyer during the upcoming Mozart/ Beethoven Classical Vienna concerts on Feb. 17-18.

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