

Endeavor to handle leasing for four Aspen complexes

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Endeavor Real Estate Group has landed a major new assignment: the management and leasing of most of the Austin office portfolio of Aspen Properties, one of the region's biggest office landlords.

The portfolio contains four complexes with 577,654 square feet, more than in the Frost Bank Tower downtown. The properties, all in North or Northwest Austin, are 8303 MoPac, Colina West and Prominent Pointe I and II.

In October, Aspen received loan extensions on the buildings in a refinancing deal with Bank of America.

The portfolio is about 83 percent occupied, with about 100,000 square feet remaining to be leased.

Live Oak Gottesman previously had the assignment.

"Three important things are converging right now: the successful restructuring of our loan, tangibly improving market conditions and our new partnership with a top-notch leasing team," said Brenda Tworoger, president of Aspen Properties.

Endeavor comes on board at a time when the region's office market is heating up, thanks to a combination of a rebounding job market and a lack of new speculative office construction.

Endeavor says now is an opportune time for a landlord like Aspen to focus on increasing occupancy levels.

Regionwide, occupancy rates have stabilized and are on the upswing again in some areas.

In terms of leasing activity generally, "we haven't seen this kind of activity in the market for three years," said Chad Marsh, a managing principal of Endeavor. He added that the activity is coming both from new tenants considering Austin for relocation and existing tenants that have been thinking about expanding.

"While the economy isn't hitting on all cylinders, I think most decision-makers are confident in the general direction of the economy and are willing to make decisions today that they weren't willing to make as recently as six months ago," Marsh said. "There are enough significant deals happening that space that has been languishing three years or so is starting to get absorbed."

Unlike the bubble that preceded the tech bust in 2001, when companies added space based on sometimes ambitious growth projections, businesses today are taking a more disciplined approach based on "real job growth and real space needs, in the very immediate future," Marsh said.

With the addition of Aspen's properties, Endeavor handles leasing for 5 million square feet of space in the Austin area, with about half of that being office space. In all, Aspen owns more than 834,000 square feet of office space in Austin.

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