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## Real Estate

# Blockbuster building could be latest addition to Wayne's world

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Class A office buildings in downtown Fort Lauderdale are the subject of a flurry of activity.

Among the structures close to changing hands: the 160,000-square-foot Blockbuster Plaza, rumored to be under contract to H. Wayne Huizenga's Republic Industries for about \$22 million, or \$140 a square foot, and the 278,626-square-foot New River Center, under contract to Philip Blumberg's American Ventures Realty for about \$44.5 million, or \$160 a square foot.

Republic spokesman Jim Donahue wouldn't comment on Huizenga's interest in the Blockbuster space. But real estate sources said a deal is pending.

And other rumored buyers of the space Blockbuster is leaving no longer appear realistic. Pan American World Airways, once said to be eyeing the Blockbuster building, has agreed to tax breaks from Dade County that will keep the start-up there.

Sports Authority, another party said to be interested in Blockbuster's former headquarters, says it plans to expand its headquarters at State Road 7 and Oakland Park Boulevard into its existing retail space.

Blumberg, meanwhile, is under contract to buy New River Center from the Tribune Co., parent of the Sun-Sentinel. American Ventures last year paid \$27.75 million for the 1401 Brickell Office Tower in Miami.

Also under contract is the 290,000-square-foot NationsBank building, which is being sold to Crocker Realty Trust of Boca Raton.

### Penske buys Medley land

With its \$1.6 million purchase of 7.35 acres at Medley Industrial Park, Penske Truck Leasing Co. plans a foray into northwestern Dade County. Penske already has a site on 27th Avenue north of Miami International Airport.

Penske plans a 12,000- to 15,000-square-foot office and maintenance facility on the property, said vice president of real estate Carlos Questell. Penske is aiming at competitor Ryder with the new location, he said.

Brokers on the deal were Jose Juncadella of Codina Bush Klein and John Paul Rosser.

#### Aviation firm moves to Port 95

International Airline Support Group is moving its 25-person parts distributorship from 8095 NW 64th St. in Miami to Building 4 at Port 95 Commerce Park West in Hollywood.

The business took 29,520 square feet at Port 95. International Airline Support Group sold its 14,960-square foot building, which it bought for \$747,200 in 1992, for \$812,500 to American Connector Corp.

Greg Lyon of Godart Real Estate Group handled the lease, and Paul Cohen of Easton-Babcock & Associates brokered the sale.

Also at Port 95, Interactive Technologies Co. leased 19,700 square feet of industrial space at Building 3, relocating its headquarters from Weston. Skip Poulsen and Allen Lindow of Brenner Real Estate Group handled the lease.

#### Dueling stats

Are Dade County's office vacancy rates going up or down? It depends on whose numbers you look at.

A Cushman & Wakefield survey of 33.6 million square feet of offices says the county's overall vacancy rate fell from 17 percent in the first quarter of 1996 to 15.2 percent in the first quarter of this year. A Grubb & Ellis look at 36.6 million square feet of office space found a different trend: Vacancies rose from 13.3 percent in the first quarter of '96 to 13.4 percent in the first quarter of '97.

The studies agree on other points. Both firms see vacancies in the high teens to low 20s in Miami's central business district and dropping lease rates downtown and on Brickell. Coconut Grove space is tight, and rental rates there are rising.

And new construction at the ReBank Tower and 220 Alhambra have pushed Coral Gables' vacancies from single to double digits.

Cushman & Wakefield managing director Rudy Prio Touzet pointed to large vacancies left by PCA, NCI, Texaco and ProSource in the Coral Gables and Airport West submarkets. And Grubb & Ellis district manager James Fried said Coral Gables property owners might soon be lowering rents or offering concessions to fend off competing markets.

#### Deals and people

? LaSalle Partners of Chicago is negotiating to buy the Columbus, Ohio-based Galbreath Co., which has seven brokers in Fort Lauderdale.

? Capital Bank, Ocean Bank, Totalbank, Colonial Bank, County National Bank of South Florida and Orix USA provided a \$48 million construction loan for NewFlorida Properties' 45-story Blue Diamond tower in Miami Beach.

? Kendall Cove Ltd., a subsidiary of PLC Properties, paid Stewart Marcus and Lloyd J. Boggio \$16.5 million for a 384-unit apartment complex at 11161 N. Kendall Drive and 8550 SW 109th Ave. Stephen Norman of Virtual Realty USA handled the deal.

? Pioneer Metals paid Glen Baker \$1.19 million for a 72,000-square-foot office/warehouse complex at 1600 N. Florida Mango Road, West Palm Beach. Louis Gaeta Jr. and Peter Applefield of Fischer-Gaeta-Cromwell handled the deal.

? Gaeta and Kerry Jackson of Fischer-Gaeta-Cromwell also handled the sale of a 2,680-square-foot building at 1240 W. Indiantown Road in Jupiter. Fidelity Federal Savings Bank paid 1st United Bank \$650,000 for the site.

Real Estate is published weekly. Got a tip? Call Jeff Ostrowski at 954-359-2111 or fax info to 954-359-2135.

Please turn to page 40 for lease listings.