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McShane-MetLife JV Buys 85 Acres for \$45M

By Bob Howard



IRVINE, CA—A joint venture of the local office of Chicago-based McShane Corp. and MetLife Real Estate Investments has acquired an 85-acre Redlands site from the Irvine-based Bixby Land Co. for \$45 million. The McShane-MetLife JV plans to develop a 1.5-million-sf industrial and office development on the site, which is in Bixby's Redlands Business Center.

The 85-acre site is undeveloped land and is a portion of the original 227-acre master-planned business center purchased by Bixby Land Co. in 2000. The center is bordered by California Street, San Bernardino Avenue, Mountain View Avenue and Lugonia Avenue, just north of the I-10 Freeway.

Bixby Land has realized significant appreciation in the land since its initial acquisition, "which allows us to move this investment into a cash-generating asset," says Bill Halford, president and CEO of Bixby. He adds that the Irvine-based firm will continue to remain active in the Inland Empire, where its portfolio includes more than one million sf of industrial space.

John A. Dobrott, VP of McShane Corp.'s Irvine office, describes the Redlands Business Center as "one of the most desirable land sites in the Inland Empire." He cites the business park's proximity to the Southern California ports and its central location along I-10 as factors making it a strategic location for the developers.

Dobrott says that the development team expects to break ground in the third quarter of 2008 on the first phase of its Redlands project, which will accommodate multiple free-standing industrial buildings. Existing tenants at the Redlands Business Center include the US Postal Service, ICON Health and Fitness, Salton Inc. and Ashley Furniture.

Bixby was represented in the land sale by a Colliers International team including Michael Daley, Ruben Goodsell, Michael McCrary and Peter McWilliams.