

around self storage

PhoneSmart Celebrates 10th Anniversary



The PhoneSmart Call Center and Off-Site Sales Force recently announced its tenth anniversary. PhoneSmart's first employee, Director Tron Jordheim, arrived for his first day of work on December 1, 2000. Jordheim spent the first week learning about the self storage industry by observing and helping out at the Storage-Mart location on Rangeline Road in

Columbia, Missouri. On December 7, PhoneSmart took its first phone calls for the existing 12-store StorageMart portfolio. By December 15, PhoneSmart had hired current call center manager Dana Shields to work one day a week so Jordheim could have a day off.

PhoneSmart was founded as a brainstorm by the StorageMart executive team. They were planning on building StorageMart from a 12-store portfolio to a much larger portfolio. They had other friends in the business who had similar goals. It was clear that a call center would boost store revenue and asset value. With a commitment from two other operators to sign on as clients, StorageMart started the subsidiary based on the technology platform build-out developed by StorageMart's chief technical officer, Monte Ellis.

PhoneSmart's original purpose was to capture phone calls missed by self storage and other rental properties' site staff and turn them into rentals by creating reservations, setting appointments and scheduling site tours. By February of 2001, PhoneSmart had not only begun taking on new clients from various other storage ownership groups, but also clients in the multi-family apartment field and the commercial real estate sector. The same goals and protocols put in place to serve as the sales back-up for self storage businesses applied beautifully to other real estate rental projects, too.

PhoneSmart now has served over 1,000 self storage, apartment and commercial real estate projects across North and Central America with call center and training services provided in English and Spanish. PhoneSmart has helped its clients create additional revenues estimated to be over 450 million dollars.

PhoneSmart continues to take all of its calls for apartment communities and self storage facilities in Columbia, Missouri, the seat of the main campus of the University of Missouri. PhoneSmart's director Tron Jordheim has become a leading figure in the self storage industry, sharing his insights and experiences as a presenter for conferences and seminars. More information about PhoneSmart can be found at WWW.PHONE-SMART.INFO.

BSC and Quadrant Align

The BSC Group, LLC and Quadrant Financial, Inc. (Quadrant) announced recently that they have formed an alliance to deliver SBA & USDA B&I loans to the self storage industry. This powerful alliance has resulted in the creation of a unique and specialized platform designed to provide borrowers with access to the combined expertise of two premier industry professionals in a one-stop shop. The BSC Group is a nationally-recognized financial and loan advisory firm with extensive experience working with self storage. Quadrant Financial is an active, nationwide SBA Preferred Lender with specialization in the superior delivery of real estate financing through government sponsored loan programs. The BSC/Quadrant collaboration offers borrowers immediate access to both self storage and SBA experts.

Quadrant president George Vredeveld commented, "We are thrilled about the recent enhancements to the SBA program which allow for financing of self storage and we quickly decided that we wanted to immediately add self storage to our diversified product mix. Because we emphasize superior and rapid delivery coupled with common sense underwriting, we recognized the importance of aligning with self storage experts and The BSC Group turned out to be the perfect fit. Their team is well known and well respected in the industry."

Shawn Hill, principal at the BSC Group, went on to say "SBA is the buzz of the self storage industry right now. The opportunities are exciting and endless. Many lenders have expressed interest in jumping into this niche but the fact that 95% of SBA lenders close very few deals on an annual basis makes it important to find a lender that is an active, national SBA preferred lender with a real estate focus, is willing to be a leader in the self storage asset class, and has a streamlined process with a history of doing a high volume of transactions. Quadrant brings these attributes to the table. As a result, this alliance leverages our respective areas of specialization."

For more information, contact Shawn R. Hill, The BSC Group, LLC at (312) 207-8237 or shill@thebscgroup.com or George Vredeveld, Quadrant Financial, Inc. at (513) 281-5625 or georgev@quadrantfinancial.com.

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SSTI Goes Canadian

Strategic Storage Trust, Inc. (SSTI), a publicly registered non-traded REIT targeting the self storage market, recently acquired an approximately 1,060-unit facility in Toronto, Canada for more than \$14 million.

The property is SSTI's first in Canada, and will be rebranded under the SmartStopSM Self Storage trade name. The property will be operated by Budget Development Partners as SSTI's onsite sub-property managers. Recently, Strategic Storage Holdings, LLC (SSH), an affiliate of SSTI, entered into a letter of intent to form a joint venture with Budget Development Partners to acquire operational self storage properties, build new facilities and redevelop existing industrial buildings throughout Canada.

"We believe there are many international opportunities in self storage and this property in Toronto represents our first," said H. Michael Schwartz, SSTI's chairman and CEO. "We continue to look for more opportunities in the greater Toronto area as well as the other major markets throughout Canada."

The property is located at 4548 Dufferin Street, approximately 9 miles/14 kilometers north of downtown Toronto in the densely populated North York area of Toronto, serving the communities of Downsview, York University Heights and Bathurst Manor. It is situated at the crossroad of Finch Avenue, which along with Dufferin, is a major commercial route.

Since the launch of SSTI more than 2½ years ago, its portfolio of wholly-owned properties has expanded to include 41 properties in 15 U.S. States (Alabama, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nevada, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia) and Toronto, Canada.

For more information about SSTI, please call (949) 429-6600 or visit WWW.STRATEGICSTORAGETRUST.COM.

Krum On Board with U-Haul



Krum Self Storage, located at 2348 Mitchell Road, recently added U-Haul truck and trailer rentals to the self storage and small office space facility that has been operating since July 2010.

Krum Self Storage can now offer its customers a variety of moving equipment and supplies designed specifically for moving household furnishings, including moving vans, open trailers, closed trailers, furniture pads, appliance dollies, furniture dollies, tow dollies and auto transports. Krum Self Storage also will offer sales items to protect their customers' belongings and make moving easier, such as heavy-duty boxes, which are made of up to 90 percent recycled content and are available in a variety of sizes.

"U-Haul is proud to be partnering with a quality independent business such as Krum Self Storage," exclaimed Jerry Crumley, president, U-Haul Company of North Texas. "Krum Self Storage is a great example of the type of successful business relationship U-Haul has established in order to build and maintain a strong network of more than 15,000 independent dealers across North America."

For more information, or to rent your moving equipment today, call (940) 482-3159.

SIMI's 3rd Quarter Results

Storage Investment management, Inc., (SIMI) announced its third quarter 2010 operating results for 31 facilities owned and contract managed from the mid-Atlantic states to New England. Occupancy grew 78 basis points compared to same quarter last year. Same store sales rose by 204 basis points compared to same quarter last year. Expenses have decreased by 23 basis points, and Net operating income (NOI) rose by 446 basis points compared to same quarter last year.

YTD same store sales rose 251 basis points compared to YTD 2009. Operating expenses have decreased by 401 basis points and NOI rose by 605 basis points compared to same quarter 2009.

Same store sales increased primarily through a reduction in tenant concessions and an increase in occupancy and stronger rates. Net operating income increases are attributable to ongoing expense reductions along with an increase in revenue.

SIMI is a boutique management company with decades of self storage management experience. If your self storage facility is not performing to your satisfaction, please call Bryce Grefe at (781) 335-1604 to discuss how your facility's performance can be improved.

Argus Affiliates Earn CCIMs

Argus Self Storage Sales Network is pleased to announce that three of its Broker Affiliates have recently earned their Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) designations. Jared Jones, CCIM of Bauer & Associates in Tulsa, Oklahoma; Paul Grisanti, CCIM of Grisanti Group Commercial Real Estate in Louisville, Kentucky; and Shannon Barnhill Barnes, CCIM of Omega Proper-

ties, Inc. in Mobile, Alabama all completed their coursework and final examinations in October 2010 to earn the prestigious Certified Commercial Investment Member designation. They join the elite group of over 9,000 CCIM professionals worldwide who provide expert commercial and investment real estate services to their clients.

Based in Denver, Colorado, the Argus Self Storage Sales Network (ASSSN) was formed in 1994 to better assist owners and investors of self storage with their real estate needs. Through the years, Argus has assembled a network of real estate brokers experienced in self storage and income property investments. For more information call 1-800-55-STORE or visit WWW.SELFSTORAGE.COM.

Pogoda Purchases Livonia Facility



Pogoda Companies, Michigan's largest self storage operator and broker, has acquired the self storage facility at 13635 Merriman Road, Livonia, Michigan, formerly known as Maximus Self Storage. The property has been rebranded and added to the growing family of National Storage Center properties owned and managed by Pogoda. Pogoda bought the former Maximus Self Storage from Flagstar Bank for a price of \$1,615,000.

The newly named National Storage Center of Livonia is located off of Interstate 96 at the intersection of Merriman and Schoolcraft Roads. This magnificent two-story building boasts almost 39,000 net rentable square feet in 338 climate controlled units. Two elevators service the second floor and the property offers the state-of-the-art amenities expected by today's self-storage customers such as individual door alarms, two ground level loading docks, two truck wells with levelers and a digitally monitored camera system throughout that provides the highest level of security.

Pogoda Companies (WWW.POGODACO.COM) is Michigan's largest independent self storage operator and one of the 30 largest in the U.S., with approximately 3 million square feet of self storage space under management in 38 facilities

in Michigan and Ohio. In addition to its Farmington Hills headquarters, Pogoda Companies has operations offices in Grand Rapids, Michigan and Dayton, Ohio.

For more contact Maurice Pogoda at (248) 855-9676 x222 or mpogoda@pogodaco.com.

Pegasus Now Using Insomniac

OpenTech Alliance is pleased to announce that the Pegasus Group, which owns and manages the Central Self Storage portfolio of 28 facilities, is hiring INSOMNIAC AssistantManagers to compliment their on-site staff. The INSOMNIAC AssistantManagers are being put in place to assist the on-site staff as they are being asked to allocate more of their time to marketing strategies such as updating Craig's List, managing social media functions, outbound prospecting for commercial tenants and keeping in touch with current customers. The new breed of AssistantManager teamed with the on-site staff offers a better customer experience and the next level of customer convenience in the self storage industry.

The INSOMNIAC AssistantManager™ comes with a team of professional self storage sales agents to reserve units, process payments, and answer customer questions, as well as an on-site self-service kiosk to rent units and process payments—when the manager is busy performing other duties or the office is closed. The new AssistantManager can help multiple people at once and works 16 hours a day for a fraction of the cost of a traditional employee.

The Pegasus Group is based in Walnut Creek, California and is an investment management firm that has been purchasing, developing and managing properties for over 25 years. With real estate including hotels, marinas and mobile parks, the bulk of the company's property holdings are in self storage. The company has 28 facilities in Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada and New York. The properties range in size from 500 to 950 units. All the facilities have on-site managers, electronic gates, and Site-Link Web software.

"OpenTech has been a valued partner of ours for the last four years, we think the integrity of their people and the quality of their products and services is unbeatable. It was a natural next step for us to give them our call center business. We trust them with our customers and really appreciate how they partner with our managers," said Margaret Martin, executive vice president of the Pegasus Group. ❖