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Partners buy building at Indiana, Ruby

Gallatin Public Affairs, Swindler to move there from Rock Pointe Tower

By Kim Crompton

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Three partners in the Gallatin Public Affairs consulting firm and Spokane attorney Geoffrey D. Swindler have bought a building at the northeast corner of Indiana Avenue and Ruby Street through a company they've formed called Big Problem Solvers LLC. Gallatin's Spokane office and Swindler's law firm plan to move into the building in November after renovating it, say Swindler and Jeffrey Bell, who manages Gallatin's office here.

Big Problem Solvers purchased the vacant, 5,200-square-foot, single-story structure at 103 E. Indiana from the Charles P. Haskins Family Trust for \$395,000, and remodeling costs probably will amount to another \$350,000 or more, the two men say.

The Gallatin partners are investing in the property through a company they've formed called Gallatin Principals LLC, which will lease space there to the consulting firm, Bell says. Investors in Gallatin Principals, along with him, include Dan Lavey, president of Gallatin Public Affairs and manager of its Portland office; and Marc Johnson, immediate past president of Gallatin Public Affairs and manager of its Boise office.

Gallatin is a 20-year-old regional crisis communications and public affairs consulting firm, with expertise in such areas as media and presentation training and energy policy and facility siting. In addition to the offices here and in Portland and Boise, it has offices in Seattle and Helena, Mont., and altogether employs about 30 people, including four here.

Its Spokane office occupies about 1,300 square feet of space on the seventh floor of the Rock Pointe Tower, at 316 W. Boone, and it will nearly double its space at the new location, Bell says.

"One of the reasons for buying the building is we plan on expanding our operation in Spokane. We're bullish about the Spokane area," he says. Also, it's an ideal time to buy real estate because of the price markdowns that have occurred due to the weak economy, he says.

Swindler has been practicing law for 20 years, and focuses on personal-injury and business-related litigation, and employment law.

His business-law experience has included representing clients in trade secret, breach of contract, and wrongful discharge matters, among others.

His practice occupies about 2,000 square feet of space on the eighth floor of the Rock Pointe Tower, and he says it has no other employees. He adds, though, that two other law firms, which he declines to name, one of them located at Rock Pointe, also plan to move to the building on Indiana. The three law firms will occupy the west side of the building, and Gallatin will occupy the east side, he says.

Copeland Architecture & Construction Inc., of Spokane, is the architect on the remodeling project, which will include both interior and exterior upgrades, and Solid Rock Contracting Inc., of Post Falls, is the general contractor, he says.

Kevin Edwards and Mark McLees, both of NAI Black, represented Bell and Swindler, respectively, in the transaction, and Earl Engle, also of NAI Black, represented the Haskins family trust.

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