



Irvine snags corporate center in \$253 million deal

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In one of the year's largest transactions, **The Irvine Co.** has completed a \$253.79 million purchase of the Bridge Pointe Corporate Centre in the Eastgate Mall area near Miramar and University Towne Centre.

The Class A office project was part of The Irvine Co.'s ongoing strategy to acquire assets formerly held by Equity Office Properties in San Diego and elsewhere.

Planned for 591,000 square feet at buildout, all but about 63,000 square feet of the complex in the 4700 and 4800 blocks of Eastgate Mall has been completed. There will be nine buildings in all with eight already constructed.



EOP completed Bridge Pointe Corporate Centre III, a \$36-million, two-building campus comprising 156,561 square feet last year.

At the time of that completion about a year ago, EOP was the largest owner of Class A office space in the Golden Triangle market with more than 2.3 million square feet of space.

With the ownership via **Blackstone** (NYSE: BX) transferring over to The Irvine Co., that latest firm easily reclaims the title.

Blackstone acquired the assets earlier this year as part of a \$39 billion leveraged buyout of EOP that was a record for the industry.

After paying for EOP, Blackstone, which is now making a play for **Hilton** (NYSE: HLT) hotels, decided to sell some of what it felt were surplus assets in its secondary markets.

The Irvine Co. then announced it would be purchasing 17 of these office properties in San Diego County, in short, the entire EOP portfolio here.

Fifteen of the buildings are in the University Towne Centre area, one is in the Del Mar Heights area, and another is in Mission Valley.

The jewel in this crown is the 850,000-square-foot Plaza at La Jolla Village in the University Towne Center area developed by Horton Plaza developer Ernest Hahn and Harry L. Summers in the late 1980s.

The six-building group is situated on 17 acres and includes three towers and three garden-style offices. The towers include the Northern Trust Tower, Pacifica Tower and Smith Barney Tower.

EOP had acquired some of these assets from **Speiker Properties Inc.** as part of a \$4.7 billion transaction in the first quarter 2001.

The Irvine Co. was already a big player in the city having purchased six major office buildings ranging from One America Plaza to Symphony Towers.

Donald Bren's company also has announced plans to develop a 34-story, 680,000-square-foot office tower at the corner of Pacific Highway and Broadway.

That project, which would be the largest office tower downtown (One America Plaza is about 630,000 square feet), is expected to get under way in mid-2008.

The Irvine Co., which rarely if ever sells any properties, typically spends millions of dollars to upgrade its assets.

In this latest case, the improvements are likely to be minor, given that the oldest of the Bridgepointe buildings are only a few years old.

In addition to One America and Symphony Towers, The Irvine Co. also owns Wells Fargo Plaza, 225 Broadway (NBC building), 101 W. Broadway and 501 W. Broadway. In addition, the firm also owns six or seven large apartment developments in San Diego County.