

**REAL ESTATE DEAL CREATES HUGE TRIAD INDUSTRIAL OWNER**

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Two local entities that own and manage real estate have merged their portfolios, which have a combined value of \$82 million and consist of nearly 2.5 million square feet of big-box industrial space.

And the entity, G-T Gateway LLC, is looking to expand those holdings even more, either through development, purchase or expansion.

G-T Gateway merged its real estate holdings with those of Jim Rucker, president of South Atlantic Cos., which has warehouse, freight and packaging divisions. Rucker is now a partner in G-T Gateway, a spin off of Gateway Holdings LLC, a real estate management firm in Winston-Salem owned by John Turner and Frank Hinman, two former executives at Forsyth Partners. G-T Gateway is now one of the largest commercial property owners in the Triad.

The operations of the individual South Atlantic Cos. were not included in the real estate-specific transaction, which was brokered by Triad Commercial Properties.

"I think everyone's well aware of how high real estate values have gotten," Rucker said. "I looked at it from an investment standpoint, and it was a good opportunity. I'm looking forward to being part of such a successful real estate investment team."

The properties involved in the merger include the former Rhodes distribution center at Rock Creek Center in eastern Guilford County, a 320,000-square-foot distribution facility that G-T Gateway plans to expand to 520,000 square feet in a project that should be complete by Sept. 1, Rucker said.

Other properties include the Bryan Park Industrial Center in northeast Guilford County and the Gateway Business Center, North Ridge Distribution Center and two buildings in West Point Business Park in Forsyth County.

"What this partnership creates for the first time is a Triadwide portfolio of big industrial properties," said Hap Royster, a partner at Triad Commercial who, along with Tom Townes, another partner in the firm, worked the deal. "The market has been trending the last several years toward bigger square footage properties. This is the first successful accumulation of a portfolio of these larger properties."

The deal means that G-T Gateway will be the sixth-largest commercial property management firm in the Triad, according to Business Journal research. And with the companies ahead of them -- Highwoods Properties, Bissell Cos., Samet Corp., Starmount Co. and Liberty Property Trust -- invested in several different types of properties, such as office and retail, G-T Gateway's position in the industrial market is even stronger.

The company's real estate is 100 percent occupied, though the former Rhodes distribution center is being leased by South Atlantic until a permanent tenant can be signed.

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