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Friday, November 7, 2008

1102 Grand hopes to plug into growth

Kansas City Business Journal - by [Suzanna Stagemeyer](#) Staff Writer

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The owners of **1102 Grand LLC** have invested more than \$1 million in the facility during the past six months, banking on checking in a rash of new tenants next year.

The 26-story downtown Kansas City building, formerly an office tower known as the Bryant Building, now holds Internet-related tenants. Located above a dense ring of fiber optics, 1102 Grand offers a secure place for voice and data businesses to connect their networks. It's bolstered with backup power sources and other tools to ensure continuous operation; large tenants include **AT&T Inc.** and **Time Warner Cable Inc.**

"What we offer is not a luxury, especially in today's economy," said Darren Bonawitz, a partner in 1102 Grand. "A lot of the companies we're visiting with today are trying to find ways to use the investment we've already made in 1102 Grand to directly impact their bottom

line in a positive way."

The recent investments have included additional power infrastructure — such as an additional megawatt of backup power and cooling systems — and 5,000 square feet of rentable space.

Bonawitz said the partners also are considering an additional diesel generator, which can cost as much as \$1 million.

"A lot of companies are not in the 'build it and they will come' strategy," he said. "We really don't have that luxury. We really have to have a certain amount of infrastructure in place due to the time frames it takes to retain and implement everything."

The type of new tenant has changed with the fortunes of the economy, Bonawitz said. There's been a shift from large companies adding extra redundancy to medium-sized businesses wanting to save money through basic information technology outsourcing. To adapt, the company has stepped up marketing and hired an outside business development specialist.

FishNet Security Inc. plans to move training equipment into one of the newly refurbished spaces at 1102 Grand on Dec. 1. The IT security solutions provider traditionally has shipped gear used for security training across the country to training sites, but the preconfigured lab area the company is setting up at 1102 Grand will let it access the equipment remotely, saving \$100,000 next year in shipping costs, said Barry Cooper, FishNet's director of training services.

The relationship probably will ramp up during the next six months, he said.

The ownership group's willingness to invest in the facility helped cement the decision to rent space, Cooper said.

"I've been around long enough to understand when somebody is really selling out to their idea," he said.

Having the facility in the heart of Downtown helps attract companies that are in the sweet spot of growth during today's rough economic times, said Jeff Kaczmarek, CEO of the **Economic Development Corp. of Kansas City**.

"We think with the recession ... that we're in, Kansas City's going-forward focus should be on small and midsize companies that we think have great growth opportunities," he said.

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“Certainly, companies in the information technology space are those that can grow well in this kind of economy.”

Kaczmarek said the facility needs to be marketed more heavily because it “really is a unique asset for downtown Kansas City.” During the past couple of years, he said, data centers increasingly have been interested in Kansas City because of the existing technology infrastructure, geographic location, low real estate expenses and high-quality work force.

“This is something we think will continue to grow,” Kaczmarek said.

Business, though so far even with last year, is verging on a boom for 1102 Grand, Bonawitz said.

“The sales pipeline is really filling up,” he said. “Based on the quantity and size of deals, I think 2009 should exceed any past year we’ve had.”

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