

Luxury Boca park planned

Lynn Insurance starts project with new headquarters

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by **Darcie Lunsford**

Boca Raton's prominent Lynn family is set to develop a \$75 million luxury office park on a high-profile sliver of land it has owned since the 1970s.

The insurance titans and philanthropists - who already have their name etched on two colleges, two research centers and an insurance conglomerate - have begun the first phase of the 222,500-square-foot Lynn Financial Center along Military Trail, just north of Town Center at Boca Raton.

A 85,000-square-foot office building will be the new headquarters of commercial underwriters Lynn Insurance Group, the insurance operation that the late Eugene Lynn moved to Boca Raton in 1976. Lynn's wife, Christine E. Lynn, now runs Lynn Insurance, the umbrella organization of Lumberman's Underwriting Alliance, U.S. Epperson Co. and LIG Insurance Agency.

The dated-looking 70,000-square-foot concrete and glass building, which Eugene Lynn built 30 years ago when he moved his Kansas City company to Boca Raton, will come down once the new three-story headquarters is completed late this year. Lynn employs about 185 in its corporate offices.

The decision to rebuild allowed the Lynn family to maximize the value of its prime 15 acres, said Jan Carlsson, assistant CEO of Lynn Insurance and the project's developer.

"The smartest way to utilize all this land was to move us," said Carlsson, Christine Lynn's nephew.

The new headquarters occupies seven acres. Carlsson plans to develop the balance of the site into a 137,500-square-foot luxury office complex. The first phase of the complex will be 44,000 square feet of upscale office condos. Construction on the units, priced at about \$350 a square foot, is slated to start next year, Carlsson said.

Carlsson acquired the 8 acres late last year for \$4.4 million from his aunt's company.

Lynn's new \$30 million headquarters will be packed with state-of-the-art features: a 90-seat lecture hall, fitness center, classrooms and data center.

One thing it won't have, however, is a typical Boca Raton look - and neither will the rest of the office park. The city is awash with pastel, Mediterranean-style buildings, first brought to the city in the 1920s by architect Addison Mizner. But Lynn's headquarters will be a modern and clean wave of glass, granite and stainless steel.

The accompanying for-sale offices also break from Mizner's design with a contemporary, multi-tiered angular design.

The building will feature the latest in hurricane protection and be designed to accommodate backup generators.

"We have spent a lot of time on this. Each buyer will be able to have full redundancy," said Keith O'Donnell, managing director of Codina Realty Services in Boca Raton, which is marketed the offices.

Lynn Financial Center is the latest in a wave of new projects to test corporate appetite to dump office rentals for office ownership.

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