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Paula Gardner: Business Review announces nominees for Deals of the Year

by Paula Gardner | Ann Arbor Business Review
Thursday October 09, 2008, 9:40 AM

Consider this article an antidote for anyone who doubts that economic growth took hold in Ann Arbor over the past year.

Below you'll find 21 companies with local over the past year representing a collective investment of at least \$1 billion.

These companies are just a sampling of the activity in this region since Oct. 1, 2007 - a time when business uncertainty clouded much of the state's collective consciousness.

Yet this group - all of them contenders for the 2008 "Deals of the Year" awards - represent many more companies that also could have been included here.

These companies will be vying for top honors in seven categories in the fourth annual event organized by *Ann Arbor Business Review*.

Winners in each category - along with Executive of the Year and Company of the Year - will be announced at the black-tie gala, scheduled for Nov. 14 at the Eastern Michigan University Student Center.

Nominees are:

1. Banking & Finance

Ann Arbor State Bank: 170 investors contribute \$10 million to launch a second local bank under the guidance of Bill Broucek, who is in the final approval stages for the institution.

National Center for Manufacturing Sciences: The Ann Arbor-based center is leading a national robotics consortium after landing a \$170 million, seven-year contract with the Department of Defense; it's also administering Michigan's 21st century jobs fund.

ReCellular: The world's largest cell phone recycling company, secured \$15 million in venture capital and is moving its operation from Dexter to Ann Arbor. CEO Chuck Newman's firm expects to add 40 employees in its expansion.

2. Construction/Development

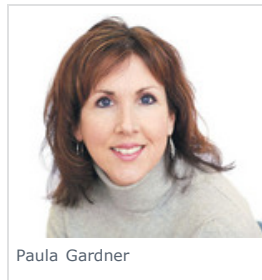
601 Forest: The 14-story, 550-650 bed student housing high-rise with retail on lower levels signifies the biggest redevelopment project to date in the South University area.

The Traditions: A \$100 million, 31-acre, 280-unit retirement development is proposed near Geddes and Dixboro by a Pittsfield Township senior housing developer and operator.

Univeristy of Michigan Stadium: The \$226 million project will add 82 private boxes and 3,600 club-level seats to the 111,000-seat facility, which will be completed in 2010.

3. Commercial Real Estate

Arbor Networks: The Web security firm doubled its office space when it signed a lease to be the first tenant in MAV Development's repositioned,



Paula Gardner

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high-tech South State Commons 3.

Conway Freight: Consolidates its three local operations into a headquarters in Ann Arbor Township after an extensive search. The deal includes space for an additional 120 employees.

Liebherr Aerospace: The German company plans to expand its 100,000-square-foot Saline factory after buying a long-coveted 54.6-acre parcel of adjacent farmland.

4. Nonprofit

Avalon Housing and Washtenaw Affordable Housing Corp.: The housing nonprofits initiated a merger, affecting their 337 housing units but providing stability for residents amid the complicated transaction.

Hope Clinic in Ypsilanti consolidates three facilities into one, planning to expand an office building to include medical, dental and food bank services.

The Humane Society of Huron Valley: Broke ground on an \$8.6 million, 26,000-square-foot shelter after collecting \$4.9 million in individual donations.

5. Technology

Barracuda Networks: The Californian IT security firm's experimental 7-person operation in Ann Arbor was so successful that the company announced plans to open a 185-person office north of downtown.

MyBuys Inc.: The Redwood City, Calif. company will develop its personalized product recommendation technology. It expects to build up to 250 employees in Ann Arbor.

Ricardo Inc.: The engineering services company invested \$2 million to establish a battery systems development center in Van Buren Township and has tripled its alternative energy business.

6. Health Care

Accuri Cytometers: The startup launched production of its revolutionary medical device, a milestone that included hiring and closing \$13 million in financing as the long-planned product headed to market.

Evangelical Homes of Michigan: It announced a \$10 million plan to construct the first memory care center in Michigan on the Saline retirement community campus.

St. Joseph Mercy Hospital: After two years of construction, the health center opened its 11-story, \$128 million hospital tower in late 2007.

7. Research (formerly Manufacturing)

Compendia Bioscience: The U-M spinout's cancer profiling database has added more than half of the world's top pharmaceutical companies as clients - including AstraZeneca and GlaxoSmithKline. And the company's database played a central role in the discovery of a key biomarker used to identify prostate cancer.

Sakti3: The startup company attracted a \$2.5 million investment to lead the state's "center of energy excellence" in Ann Arbor. The company will commercialize the development of high-power batteries that withstand the rigors of automotive use - and a process for repurposing them afterwards.

Toyota: The automaker opened its \$187 million, 530,000-square-foot engineering complex in York Township, months after announcing that it would invest an additional \$100 million to establish a North American

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