

Brokers team up at new industrial park

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Two of Long Island's most prolific commercial brokerage firms have teamed up to develop the Town of Brookhaven's newest industrial park.

Hauppauge-based Corporate Realty Services and Zere Real Estate Services in Ronkonkoma, two companies that normally fight for the same business, will serve as co-exclusive brokers of the newly christened Empire Corporate Park off Horseblock Road in Medford.

While one brokerage firm would usually handle sales of the 20 lots at the park, both agree that two will make things go quicker

than one.

Marie Zere, chief executive at Zere, said the team concept doubles marketing efforts, encourages cooperation and can turn into a friendly competition.

"The real strengths behind a co-exclusive benefit the owner of a property most of all," Zere said. Located within a stone's throw from three other active business parks and within the town's Empire Zone, the new park owned by Greenstar Enterprises covers 66 acres. Its brokers say it is the only industrial subdivision with sewers in Suffolk County.

The sewer connection increases the land's value, especially since less than 30 percent of Suffolk has sewers. Having sewers also gives the owner the ability to construct a building twice the size on a site and allows certain types of industrial users while protecting the groundwater and environment. Sewers also streamline the permit process, eliminating the need for health department approval of septic systems.

Empire is a ready-to-go park with roads and infrastructure in place, so most companies can begin building right away. And because it's in the Empire Zone, firms that settle here can expect wage credits of up to \$3,000 per new employee, an investment tax credit of up to 10 percent of development costs and a property tax credit. The Brookhaven Industrial Development Agency can also offer incoming businesses further property tax abatements as well as tax exempt bonds of up to \$10 million.

Zere said building from the ground up in the town's Empire Zone can save a company up to 60 percent of the cost of construction when maximizing benefits over 10 years.

Zere Real Estate's Michelle Zere said the tax benefits also help keep firms from looking to move off the Island.

Two private intermodal truck-to-rail depots are in the works nearby, according to John O'Hara of Corporate Realty, which adds another attraction for industries with heavy shipping needs. He said activity in the usually robust industrial sector has slowed recently, but deals are still being made.

Because of limited supply, the Island's industrial sector has always enjoyed a low vacancy rate, which was about 4 percent in the first quarter of 2009. But asking rents have dropped, now averaging about \$10 per square foot in Nassau County and about \$7.50 per square foot in Suffolk. Sales of Suffolk industrial properties in the first quarter ranged from \$99 per square foot

to \$117 per square foot.

As for teaming up with a rival on the new industrial park, Corporate Realty's Leo Farrell said "the benefits are increased marketing, broader customer base and a team atmosphere that helps bring deals to the table."

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