



First Columbia to construct new \$5 million 30,000 s/f office building; Project team: Bette & Cring and Keystone Architects

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First Columbia, an Albany regional developer, will start construction of a new speculative, two-story, 30,000 s/f office building at its well-known Century Hill Plaza business park.

First Columbia is moving forward with construction of 40 Century Hill before securing a tenant. Following the economic recession of 2008, most markets were vastly overbuilt and, therefore, have a tremendous inventory of space to absorb. The occupancy rate of First Columbia's Century Hill Plaza tells a different story, however. The office park has consistently shown strong leasing activities.

"Inventory for our Tier 1 office product is very tight and leasing has been active, indicating a strong demand for more high quality space in the Airport market," said Deborah Mikhitarian, partner at First Columbia. "Our Century Hill Plaza development has remained a strong performer through the downturn with occupancy dropping to only 92.5% in Q3 in 2011. Today, the park currently boasts a 98.7% occupancy rate."

40 Century Hill Dr. will be the seventh out of eleven approved buildings within the 625,000 s/f professional office park off Rte. 9, fronting more than 2,000 s/f of the Northway (I-87).

The 2010 Albany-Schenectady-Troy Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was 870,716, and is the fourth-largest urban area in New York and the 58th-largest MSA in the country. Including nearby Saratoga Springs, where many Albany area office workers commute from, the region's metro area population tops 1 million.

Though First Columbia has already been approached by companies interested in the property, no leases have been signed yet. Each floor of 40 Century Hill consists of 15,000 s/f of professional, high tech space inspired by design, functionality, and energy efficiency.

"We believe that the market will continue to improve for high tech and high quality tenants," said Kevin Bette, founder of First Columbia. "I think the region underestimates the fundamental shift that has occurred due to the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering and its growth as well as the state's initiative to attract technology based employment."

Tenants looking to occupy 50% or more of the building will be given signage rights to the building facing I-87.

"Companies in our region want top-notch office space, and right now this is the only Tier 1 space on the market," said Patricia McGrath of 40 Century Hill. "We have no doubt this space will fill up soon." The builder of the project is Bette & Cring Construction and the Architect is Keystone Architects. Financing will be provided by M&T. The total project cost is \$5 million.

Century Hill Plaza, currently houses some of the region's biggest names including: NY Life, Bank of America, Time Warner, BlueShield, AngioDynamics, Voya (formerly ING), JLT, and the Bette Companies Headquarters.

Rendering Credit: Jacques Cortelyou

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