



Engel Burman Group executives discuss South Florida expansion plans with CIBS members

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Shown (from left) are: Scott Burman, Jan Burman and Steven Krieger. (Photo credit: CIBS)

Syosset, NY Executives of one of L.I.'s largest developers of senior housing told the Commercial Industrial Brokers Society of L.I. (CIBS) that a combination of factors, including a cutoff of new natural gas supplies, the prospect of a state prevailing-wage law, rent control, high property taxes and saturation in the assisted living business, is behind a move into South Florida. The Engel Burman Group recently signed or soon will sign contracts for sites to develop units of its upscale Bristol Assisted Living chain in South Florida, according to Jan Burman, president of the company. She addressed an audience of 100 CIBS members and guests at an Oct. 10 meeting.

"With all the things going on in Albany that are scaring us, we feel that we have to have other markets available," said Steven Krieger, a partner in the firm.

"At some point it's just not economically possible for us to stay here," said Burman.

The firm, which entered the senior housing business in 1999, is in contract to buy a property in downtown Boca Raton, is about to go to contract with the University of Miami for a site in Dade County and is negotiating to buy a site in Aventura, said Burman. "That's the next direction for us ... We expect to have three projects in the ground next year, maybe \$400 or \$500 million worth of work."

Engel Burman plans to construct as many as eight facilities in South Florida to give it economies of scale, said another partner, Scott Burman.

The firm currently operates 21 Bristol facilities on Long Island, Westchester and New Jersey and has two facilities under construction in Manhattan and two in Brooklyn. The firm also has 1,000 multifamily units under construction.

Burman said the firm decided to expand to Florida, because of the convenience of getting there from Long Island MacArthur Airport in Ronkonkoma, which is close to the firm's management office. He said the firm's staff "can take Southwest Airlines to get to Florida in almost the time it takes to get to

Manhattan or New Jersey.”

Also, he noted there are many snowbirds in South Florida from the New York City area. “There’s name reition we wouldn’t have if we went to other parts of the country; it’s the same time zone. It makes a lot of sense. It’s a right to work state. It’s less expensive to build there.”

The firm entered the assisted living business after witnessing the graying of the Post War population on Long Island, the nation’s first suburb. “There was no purpose-built assisted living,” said Krieger. Also, they said, municipal planners were wary of new projects that would generate school children and traffic. Nassau and Suffolk, they discovered, were the two best counties in the country for assisted living. Now, the firm is developing Bristal Assisted Living facilities in Manhattan with a population of 1.9 million people and only 75 licensed beds.

Engel Burman is seeking highly visible retail sites for new Bristal projects, Krieger said. “Where a retailer went out, where a big box can’t be filled, where there’s extra land. We don’t generate any traffic, cars, noise or school kids.”

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