

Grubb & Ellis Tops in Commercial Listings

By **Richard Metcalf**
Of the Journal

Grubb & Ellis New Mexico has the lion's share of commercial property listings in the Albuquerque metro area and Santa Fe, according to a compilation that the company itself did.

As of Sept. 3, Grubb & Ellis had 598 listings of property for both sale and lease, or 22 percent of the total market. Maestas & Ward Commercial Real Estate was second with 324 listings, or 12 percent of the market, followed by Roger Cox & Associates with 187 listings, or 7 percent, and NAI The Vaughan Co. Commercial Real Estate Services with 153 listings, or 6 percent.

The number of listings is based on what each company had posted on the Commercial Association of Realtors-New Mexico Web site, which has a commercial multiple listing service comparable to what's available for houses. There were a total of 2,748 listings on the Web site on Sept. 3.

Grubb & Ellis' Ken Schaefer compiled the information at the request of CEO John Lewinger, who was curious about where the company stood in terms of market share. Lewinger said the results "show we're well positioned for when the market turns around."

In addition, with 598 listings, the company is spending about \$8,000 a month on signage. "Our sign bill is through the roof," Schaefer joked.

One cautionary note is that the numbers are a straightforward count of listings, which means postings of individual suites or condos within a building each count as a listing, Schaefer said. As a result, the number of listings for some commercial real estate brokerages may appear to be either inflated or deflated, he said.

"Everybody does it," he said about the practice of listing individual suites in a building rather than just the building itself. "In this big of a count, it will equalize itself out."

However, a deflated count appears to be the case with CB Richard Ellis, whose local office is broadly regarded as a powerhouse in the commercial brokerage scene. CB Richard Ellis came in fifth with 142 listings, or 5 percent of the total.

But CB Richard Ellis Managing Director Jim Chynoweth said the company's "mode of operation is to handle larger projects." In terms of total square footage as of June 30, he said CB Richard Ellis ranked No. 1 for office space.

Rounding out Grubb & Ellis' compilation is sixth-place Berger Briggs Real Estate and Insurance with 115 listings or 4 percent, followed by Coldwell Banker Commercial with 81 listings or 3 percent, Sycamore Associates with 73 listings or 3 percent, Real Estate Advisors with 68 listings or 2 percent, and West Wood Realty with 58 listings or 2 percent.

The remaining 949 listings, or 35 percent of the total, are divvied up between numerous companies.

Home of their own

Air Management Services, which does commercial HVAC servicing and installation, is taking a giant leap with its purchase of a 28,750-square-foot office and warehouse at 4516

Anaheim NE.

"As one of the employees said, "This will solve all of our problems,"" said company executive Dale Rechtenbach.

For the past 13 years, the company has leased space at 8904 Adams NE and currently occupies about 9,000 square feet. The lease expires in November.

"We've spent tons of money on leasing," Rechtenbach said. "We've been looking toward buying versus leasing for a couple years now."

The Anaheim building was marketed by Jim Smith of CB Richard Ellis at an asking price of \$2,033,090. Air Management Services paid less than \$1.9 million for it.

"I think we got a great deal on the building," he said. "The timing was right."

Air Management was represented in its purchase by Trudy Jones of Maestas & Ward Commercial Real Estate, who helped the company move out of a garage and into 1,200 square feet of leased space back in 1990. The most recent effort took a year and a half, prompting Rechtenbach to say, "Trudy was more than patient. She never faltered at my indecision."

A critical component in the purchase of the Anaheim building was financing through the U.S. Small Business Administration's 504 loan program. "I think these SBA loans are something that businesses need to be aware of," Rechtenbach said.

The company was founded in 1988 by Rechtenbach, David Schellinger and Laura Edwards. The company launched an employee stock ownership program in August 2007, which Rechtenbach called "the best thing we've ever done."

Air Management, which currently has 43 employees, has seen steady demand for maintenance work on heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems in existing buildings. Three-quarters of the company's contracts related to new construction involve public projects, such as the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Artesia.

"People are spending as little money as possible right now, even if it's not the best thing in the long term," he said. "There's huge (energy) efficiency gains in the new equipment."