

Commercial ExecutiveTM Magazine

THE RIVULON DEVELOPMENT

COVER STORY

Major expansion in Gilbert, Ariz.

BROKER OF THE MONTH

LeDonna Spongberg of CBRE Phoenix

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Rivulon

DEVELOPING MORE THAN JUST A PROJECT

FAST FACTS:

Owner/Developer: Nationwide Realty Investors, Ltd.

Leasing firm: Lee & Associates, brokers Fred Darche & John Cerchiai

Retail leasing firm: De Rito Partners, brokers Marty De Rito & Paul Serafin

Architectural firm: Butler Design Group



Think Gilbert, Arizona is just another sleepy town on the outskirts of the Valley? Well, think again. /// Before you know it, this predominately single-family home community with a population of 235,000 will be a bustling city with commercial opportunities at every corner. Projects like the sizable 250+ acre Rivulon development have already taken hold of the reins to completely change the landscape of Gilbert. It's no surprise this city has been rated one of the top five fastest-growing communities in the nation. /// **WHAT IS RIVULON?** Located at the corner of Gilbert Road and the Loop 202, this premier business district will encompass three million square feet of Class A office, 500,000 SF of retail, 250 hotel rooms and potential for residential units. This will create opportunities specifically for both traditional and boutique retail with prime visibility thanks to ideal exterior signage options and landscaped views. Even more, Rivulon is designed to ensure a cohesive flow among its future projects while sustaining sensitivity to resources. /// The first phase of development is already underway with a LA Fitness now open and bringing in hundreds of consumers daily. Next on the menu are five projects, including a 150,000-RSF and a 125,000-RSF office building to be completed late 2015. /// "We felt the access was great, and that there was an opportunity to drastically reduce commute times because it will push Southeast Valley residents to change to a 'reverse commute.' Also, we've already seen significant interest from companies wanting to have a presence here for its sophisticated workforce," says Brian J. Ellis, President and COO at Nationwide Realty Investors, Ltd. (NRI). /// And with a portfolio of more than \$1 billion in developments and investments across 11 states under his name, Ellis knows exactly what he's talking about. Through the ever-changing real estate and economic climates, he has guided the company always in the right direction. /// Additionally, the Ohio-native serves on the committee of Experience Columbus, the city's convention and visitor's bureau, as well as chair of the Board of Commissioners for the Columbus Sports Commission. Ellis holds a business degree from Miami University in Ohio and an M.B.A. from Duke University. /// **ALL IN THE PLAN** NRI, the owner and developer behind this \$750 million investment, is a subsidiary of Nationwide, and has pinpointed exactly what steps to take in their strategic plan. One of the first tasks to capitalize on is infrastructure. /// NRI is seasoned in office, commercial, retail, hospitality and residential real estate markets and directly through joint ventures owns more than \$1.5 billion in real estate investments across the nation. Gainey Ranch



Corporate Center (Class A office space) in Scottsdale, Ariz. is also a product of NRI's long-term development and is home to industry-leading companies such as Scottsdale Insurance, Nationwide, Shea Homes and Sage Software. /// Per the careful planning, the Gilbert Road improvements were completed in the first quarter of 2015. This included vital improvements for up-and-coming cities like Gilbert, such as road widening, walkways and landscape along the eastern side. Walkability is a key element that has been incorporated into the master plan. /// Also within the development, Rivulon Boulevard was completed up until the roundabout in that same quarter, and Pecos Road had road widening and landscape improvements finished last June to encourage easy mobility for future tenants. Desert landscaping is a personal touch the Columbus, Ohio-based company proudly implemented. /// "We've already made a lot of progress; a lot of dirt is moving everywhere. We have a tremendous amount of additional infrastructure underway to be completed late this year to early next year that will make a huge difference on the site," says Ellis, who has been with Nationwide since 1989. /// **A NEW COMMUNITY** The 45,000-SF LA Fitness officially opened its doors last April, being the first retailer in the new development. Following closely is the three-story Isagenix International Headquarters, with an address of 155 E. Rivulon Blvd. The 150,000-RSF building is anticipated to be completed this December. /// "We're here [on

this site in Gilbert] because we really feel like it has enormous potential. It has great visibility with one mile of frontage off the 202," says Ellis. "Signage is available both on the buildings and pylon signs to maximize exposure for our tenants." /// **To NRI, this is developing much more than just a large-scale project with multiple buildings – it's inherently forming the platform for a new community.** /// **MISSION: POSSIBLE** This particular site will create 15,000-20,000 employment opportunities, a main priority for the elected officials and staff of Gilbert. It was important to NRI to be aligned with the economic goals of the community and its leaders. /// "Our mission is to create a high-quality environment unlike anything that's been done in the Southeast Valley and arguably in all of metro Phoenix," says Ellis. /// Next in line is the four-story speculative building east of Isagenix at 275 E. Rivulon Boulevard, and it is now leasing. With 125,000 RSF, this building will be open for business in September. And, NRI isn't stopping there! There are also plans for two two-story office buildings of 60,000 RSF each as well as a 17,000-SF retail center, now leasing. /// "Rivulon, to us, is really the building and maintaining of a timeless, high-quality real estate investment and we want to remain owners for the long term," Ellis says. "With all of our projects, it's really important that our buildings withstand the test of time." ■

