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## Rotarian rises to top at real estate developer

BY DAVID PARKER, CALGARY HERALD DECEMBER 3, 2009

STORY PHOTOS ( 1 )



Royop Corp. chairman Harvey Thal, from left, works with new president Melvin Foht and vice-chairman Brian Kowall. Photograph by: Dean Bicknell, Calgary Herald, Calgary Herald

Melvin Foht credits Andy Melton of Avison Young for sparking his rise up the executive ranks at a successful commercial real estate developer.

Melton introduced Foht to Harvey Thal and his team at Royop. In 1997, Foht joined the company and 12 years later, he's been appointed to the position as its president.

Royop has a long history of success and expertise in commercial real estate development, primarily within the retail sector.

Foht started his real estate career with Daon Development in Edmonton, moved to Calgary in 1986 as regional commercial manager with Melcor, and then joined Penreal Advisors in its Vancouver office for three years.

Transferred to Calgary in 1991 as vice-president and managing partner for Alberta to open a new office here, Foht was instrumental in Penreal purchasing and renovating Energy Plaza and leasing space in it to the National Energy Board, as well as developing Sunridge Medical Centre and several industrial properties.

But when the company was sold to Bentall Real Estate Services, Foht decided to stay in Calgary and was delighted when he was offered a position on the executive team at Royop.

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The company was founded in the early 1970s by Morris Kowall as Morris Kowall & Associates, changing its name to Royop in 1997. Before Kowall passed away in 2005, he had been involved with the real estate industry for more than 50 years with industry leaders such as Trizec Corp. and had overseen many premier projects, including Marlborough Mall and Westbrook Mall in Calgary and Calgary's first highrise luxury condominium, Roxboro House.

He remained as chairman of Royop but handed over operations of the company to president Thal and vice-president Brian Kowall who were later joined by Foht.

Under the new structure with Foht as president, Thal becomes chairman and CEO and Kowall vice-chairman; other senior positions are held by development manager Jeremy Thal and Laverne Planden, director of property management.

Among Royop's major shopping centre developments are North Pointe in Country Hills; Coventry Hills Centre, where the adjacent 5.2 hectares were sold to Real Canadian Superstore; and Shawnessy Towne Centre, anchored by 537,000-square-foot Wal-Mart.

Outside the city, it has developed Pine Centre in Strathmore, a 12.1-hectare shopping centre in Medicine Hat--also anchored by Wal-Mart and Canadian Tire--and this fall opened the 100,000-square-foot phase one of Wye Road Crossing shopping centre in Sherwood Park. It owns an adjoining 20.2-hectare parcel that is planned as future development.

Royop developed the retail component of the successful Garrison Woods retail/condominium project and is currently partnered with the Vertical Properties division of Morrison Homes in a similar development on 85th Street S.W. in Westhills.

Phase I of its Gates of Panorama Hills is 92 per cent leased, including a large Rexall Drug Store. The site has been cleared and a development permit has been applied for to start construction of Gates of Walden in the southeast which Royop expects to be open for business by spring 2011.

Foht has taken responsibility for leading a dynamic Calgary development company that also manages almost two million square feet of retail properties.

But he finds the time to be an active Rotarian--he is past-president of the Centennial Club--and serves on the alumni board of the Haskayne School of Business.

After an exhibition by Davis Cup players tonight at the Glencoe Club, Calgary businessman Harold Milavsky will be honoured as an inductee into the Canadian Tennis Hall of Fame.

He served on the board for 11 years and among his many contributions to the sport was his leadership in building a world-class tennis centre in Toronto and his tremendous support for our Davis Cup team.

Proceeds of the dinner will establish the Harold P. Milavsky Provincial Championship.

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A new boutique wealth management firm has chosen The Lorraine, the elegantly renovated historic building on 12th Avenue S.W. as its home. TriVest Wealth Counsel was founded earlier this year by Craig Stanford and Craig Pelletier, who left large investment houses to launch their company focused on tailored investment solutions for high net worth families and entrepreneurs.

Both are chartered financial analysts with over 30 years of combined experience, Pelletier's tenure in equity research includes positions at GMP Securities, Canaccord Adams and Blackmont Capital. Stanford's career as portfolio manager includes companies such as Cypress Capital Management and Mawer Investment Management.

David Parker Appears Tuesday, Thursday And Friday. He Can Be Reached At 403-830-4622 Or E-mail

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