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BFL finds new home in Kensington

BY DAVID PARKER, CALGARY HERALD DECEMBER 11, 2009

STORY PHOTOS (1)



Penny Dye, managing vice-president of BFL Canada, stands inside the firm's new Kensington House location.

Photograph by: Ted Rhodes, Calgary Herald, Calgary Herald

In July 2005, when Penny Dye opened the Calgary office of BFL Canada, which provides international risk and insurance services from its headquarters in Montreal and through offices in seven other cities, she thought she had to be in the downtown core.

Dye has spent 26 years in the insurance brokerage business and had been a managing director and partner with one of the major Canadian companies. Business was a downtown thing.

As BFL's managing vice-president in Calgary, she chose to open her office in Watermark Tower. But after putting up with the high cost of rent, parking, the frustration of just getting to work -- she gave up on her bicycle commute as too dangerous -- and wishing to differentiate the company from others, she decided on a move.

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She enlisted the help of Dennis Djonlich, associate vice-president of CB Richard Ellis, who found her great space in the Kensington area and also subleased BFL's downtown space to Ranger Royalty.

Her new lease is for 5,000 square feet on the second floor of Kensington House along Kensington Crescent, plenty of room for her 18 staff, who are beginning to enjoy the convenience of being able to walk to good restaurants, coffee shops and unique retailers.

Founded by Barry F. Lorenzetti in 1987, BFL is the largest family and employee-owned brokerage in Canada, with more than 300 employees across Canada catering to a wide range of local, national and international clients. It was the first Canadian firm to be granted a licence to handle transactions on the floor of Lloyds of London.

The majority of Dyte's staff have also worked with the larger houses, but believe in the BFL model, preferring to be with a smaller and more agile company.

Clients here include film and music festivals, film and video producers, event planners, Hockey Canada and the Calgary Stampede, which covers both entertainment and sports.

About 98 per cent of the work is in commercial brokerage, which also includes energy, real estate, financial services and the construction industry.

The 36-storey Class AAA Jamieson Place tower has received its occupancy permit and tenants can now begin work on fixing up their own spaces.

Mark St. Pierre of [Avison Young Real Estate](#) has been given responsibility to sub-lease the top 15 floors of between 24,300 and 27,000 square feet for an availability of 328,954 square feet.

The location on the corner of 4th Avenue and 2nd Street S.W. between the Westin hotel and BP Centre is surely a plus, as are the fitness facility, conference rooms and 26,000-square-foot winter garden.

The space formerly occupied by Gerry's Diner at the corner of 5th Street and 12th Avenue S.W. will reopen as Hudson's Canadian Taphouse, according to the blog of Rob Campbell, associate of CIR Realtors who specializes in restaurants and pubs.

New owners are Chris Decock and Mike Yasinski of Gateway Entertainment in Edmonton, where they have other Hudson's including one in West Edmonton Mall.

Victoria Crossing BRZ is about to change its name to Victoria Park: Urban Calgary. Executive director David Low naturally engaged a member company to produce its rebranding. Indigo Ice, which works out of the Flamingo Block on 11th Avenue S.W., created a distinctive logo that conveys the new vibrancy and energy of the district.

David Parker Appears Tuesday, Thursday And Friday. He Can Be Reached At 403-830-4622 Or E-Mail info@davidparker.ca.

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