

Steelbridge Capital expands services

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By Oscar Pedro Musibay

Commercial real estate investor Steelbridge Capital is expanding into property management four months after the local head of Cushman & Wakefield's capital markets group came onboard.

Miami-based Max Property Management, a property manager working with lenders on bank-owned properties, will operate as Steelbridge Real Estate Services going forward.

Brothers Anthony Manno and Michael Manno, who were co-managing principals at Max Property, are running Steelbridge RES, with the latter as the new venture's managing principal.

In addition to property management, Steelbridge RES will offer financial services.

Steelbridge RES principals have managed more than 750,000 square feet of residential and office assets throughout Florida during the past five years. Clients have included Helm Bank USA, Commonfund Realty, Uccello Immobilien GmbH and Steelbridge Capital.

Commercial broker Jeremy Larkin, president of NAI Miami Commercial Real Estate Services Worldwide, said the Max Property partnership is a good fit because it diversifies Steelbridge's revenue stream and allows Steelbridge to leverage a company with a management track record rather than reinventing the wheel.

Steelbridge has owned property throughout Florida, employing a traditional buy-and-hold investment strategy. For example, it sold Courvoisier Centre, on Miami's Brickell Key, for \$150 million in 2007 after an eight-year hold.

Jay Caplin, formerly of C&W, joined Steelbridge this summer. He said the addition of the Max Property shop provides services such as REO property management and financial services that are increasingly in demand in this economy.

Max Property's REO focus was an important fact in the partnership because of the high volume of foreclosure activity in the marketplace, Caplin said.

The Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach metropolitan statistical area ranked 15th out of 203 markets in the U.S., with 53,710 properties with foreclosure filings in the third quarter. That translates to one in every 45 units falling into default.

That was down 5.2 percent from the second quarter, but up 34.6 percent from the same time last year, according to the Irvine, Calif.-based online real estate marketplace, RealtyTrac.

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Mike Manno said his bank-owned property management activity, which does everything from secure to sell the reclaimed asset, has tripled in the last two years in response to increased demand.

Partnering with Max Property also was a good fit because it managed a property for Steelbridge Capital's Gavin Campbell in the past.

Incorporating financial services into the Steelbridge portfolio also will appeal to owners looking to realize new efficiencies and offset losses from shrinking tenancy, Manno said. The Mannos' hands-on approach to property management improves efficiency because they are constantly interacting with commercial tenants and addressing the needs of both commercial and residential property owners.

"Owners are more in touch with numbers today than they have ever been," Mike Manno said. "They want transparency."