



Sign in to al.com »

Not a member? Register Now »

Site Search

Search Local Business Listings

Search by keyword, town name, Web ID and more...

Submit C

- Home
- News
- Weather
- Sports
- Entertainment
- Travel
- Interact
- Jobs
- Autos
- Real Estate



Business News from The Birmingham News

National and local business, financial and economic news from The Birmingham News

Sponsored By:



Inside

Business News from The Birmingham News »

Browse by category

- Breaking News
- Economic recovery
- Economic_Scorecards
- Holidays
- Richard Scrushy

RSS Feed

Browse by month

Select a date

Breaking News »

Ex-Forge developer works on new Birmingham entertainment area

By Roy L. Williams -- The Birmingham News

May 07, 2010, 6:30AM



[View full size](#)

Cityville Block 121 is leasing 21,388 square feet of retail space on the ground floor, under 256 apartments that began leasing this week.

John Elkington of Performa Entertainment, whose contract for a proposed BJCC entertainment district was canceled last year for a lack of progress, is now handling retail leasing duties for a major new development on Birmingham's Southside.

Officials with Corporate Realty, one of the developers behind the \$35 million Cityville Block 121 mixed-use project in the 100 block of 20th Street South, said they hired Elkington and his son, Fletcher, to help them recruit retailers, restaurants and service tenants.

The move has paid off, with Elkington and his son already having letters of intent or entering into negotiations that could fill nearly two-thirds of the 21,388 square feet of retail space, said Brian Wolfe, Corporate Realty's director of development.

"John's done a really good job for us. He's done everything he told us he'd do," Wolfe said.

Bus
Nev

- Al
- ge
- S:
- of
- Bi
- di
- Al
- pi
- 6:
- M
- fc



Pop

- Alab.
- Birm
- AG
- Heal
- Prix
- Ben

Elkington said he is excited to be involved in the project, which includes 256 one-and-two bedroom apartments in the 100 block of 20th Street South and a nearby Hyatt Place Hotel that opened last year.

"We've gotten some new tenants to Birmingham who wouldn't have been able to go into The Forge," the name of his proposed entertainment district near the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex. "It's an exciting development to be a part of."

Wolfe and Corporate Realty President Robert Simon said they had no qualms about hiring Elkington, thanks to his track record of attracting tenants to Beale Street's entertainment district in Memphis and other projects. Simon said Elkington's inability to get financing for the planned BJCC entertainment district shouldn't be held against him. The BJCC board terminated Elkington's contract last May, a year after hiring him to help develop the district.

"There was nobody able to get financing for a project like that in this economy," Simon said.

Elkington said he and his son come to Birmingham a couple times a month, and he keeps in close contact with officials at the BJCC, which last week announced plans for the Marketplace, a \$70 million 303-room Westin Hotel and entertainment district to be built along Richard Arrington Boulevard.

"I'm hopeful that some of the tenants I had signed up for the Forge will be able to go into the BJCC's entertainment district," Elkington said.

BJCC Board Chairman Clyde Echols said Elkington had a good group of tenants that would fit well at the BJCC's entertainment district. Among the tenants Elkington had signed were Coyote Ugly, a retail venture by comedian Jeff Foxworthy, Golden Rule Bar-B-Que, and nightclubs by "American Idol" winners Ruben Studdard and Taylor Hicks.

"There's nothing formal, but we'd love to work with him," Echols said.

Wolfe and Simon wouldn't name tenants who have signed deals or expressed interest in Cityville Block 121's retail component, which will be located on the street-level below the apartments.

"We've made a concerted effort to create a good mix of retail and services in our tenant line-up in order to serve the residents in the area," Wolfe said. "Currently, we are finalizing terms with a dry cleaner and a salon as well as a breakfast, lunch and dinner restaurants."

Corporate Realty's development partner, Inland American Communities, this week began accepting apartment leases through a Web site, Cityville-Block121.com. The one-and two-bedroom apartments will be phased in to open between July and September.

"We expect the beginning of resident leasing to generate more momentum for the retail leasing," Wolfe said. "Our intent is to have the majority of the retail open for business by September."

Simon said the goal is to make Cityville Block 121 a destination point, just like nearby Five Points South.

Finar
Willi:
slum



Mos
The :

5
comr

4
comr

3
comr

3
comr

3
comr

Fror

- Cel
 - Liv
- away
Cr



Site Ma
► Ma