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\$47M Lab Slated for Feb Groundbreaking

By Amy Wolff Sorter

MIAMI-Developer DEA South Florida LLC is readying to launch construction on a \$47 million state-of-the-art laboratory. Once the facility is completed in approximately 18 months, the Drug Enforcement Administration will use it for a state-of-the-art, drug testing laboratory.

The developer, consisting of a joint venture between Galaxy Investments and Halle Enterprises, will launch construction on the nine-acre site in the Beacon Lakes Business Park during February 2010. The agency has signed a 20-year lease for the facility.

Herndon, VA-based Cambridge Development Group is the contractor and the asset manager. Other companies involved with the project are Gaudreau Associates Architects, BE&K Building Group (A KBR, Inc. Company), Craven Thompson and ECS Limited. Construction financing is being provided by M&T Bank and was arranged by Cambridge through Gary McGlynn of Northmarq Capital.

Andrew J. Czekaj, manager of DEA South FI. LLC tells GlobeSt.com that the project is a prototype facility for the agency's regional approach to testing the composition of drugs and other substances seized by government agents. Czekai says, adding that the company constructed a similar such facility at Dulles Airport in 2001.

Because of the technology and equipment involved with the new lab, Czekaj acknowledges this isn't your average, garden-variety type of commercial real estate or laboratory. "This requires detailed coordination between all the team members, the DEA and the general contractor," Czekaj says. Furthermore, as a secured facility requiring specific temperature controls, the HVAC, mechanical and electricity have different parameters. "Take a regular building's complexities and multiply them by about 10, and that's what you have with this assignment," Czekaj comments.

Czekaj says the site at Beacon Lakes Business Park was selected by the user because of the size and configuration. He adds that the DEA is planning to build similar facilities elsewhere in the U.S.



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