

KKE Architects Sees Great Opportunities During Challenging Economic Times; KKE Recently Opened Nearly Three Million Sq. Ft.

KKE Architects is busy with more than 15 million sq. ft. on the boards and recently opened nearly three million sq. ft. In Hollywood, Calif., KKE completed a meticulous, state-of-the-art interior renovations and improvements to the landmark Hollywood Palladium; and the new 170,000 sq. ft. Wright County Jail and Law Enforcement Center in Buffalo, Minn. KKE is also the project architect for Investec's Gene Autry Plaza, a new 60,000 sq. ft. shopping center located in Palm Springs, which will soon celebrate its grand opening of the first ground-up Smart & Final Extra! Store.

April 13, 2009 (FPRC) -- PASADENA, CALIF. – KKE Architects, Inc., headquartered in Minneapolis, with offices in Pasadena; Las Vegas, Phoenix, Tucson and Irvine, Calif., announced today that the company sees great opportunities for growth and continued diversity even as difficult economic times continue.

According to Brian Arial, NCARB, AIA and Director / Managing Principal of KKE Architects West Coast operations, "Despite the challenges in our industry, we continue to find opportunities with our relationship approach to architecture and planning. We are seeing a return to good fundamentals of real estate development, and the strong companies will survive and even prosper over the next couple years."

Even though the volume of projects have slowed down, KKE Architects is busy with more than 15 million sq. ft. on the boards, including a proposed two million sq. ft. mixed-use development, The Marketplace at El Paseo, with Beverly Hills, Calif.-based O&S Holdings, which is scheduled to break ground next year; and an aggressive three million sq. ft. expansion of the Mall of America with Triple Five Group, Ltd., based in Alberta, Canada.

KKE Architects recently opened nearly three million sq. ft. in diverse architectural projects including the opening of the final phase of Jess Ranch Marketplace in Apple Valley, Victor Valley's largest retail power center with 12-screen Cinemark Theatres, Best Buy, Bed Bath & Beyond, ULTA and 24 Hour Fitness; and several public/private projects across the country such as an 110,000 sq. ft. new student center at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minn. (with more projects underway at Bethel University), a new 30,000 sq. ft. office and court building for Imperial County, Calif. and the new 170,000 sq. ft. Wright County Jail and Law Enforcement Center in Buffalo, Minn.

In Hollywood, Calif., KKE completed an aggressive renovation of the landmark Hollywood Palladium for Live Nation, which has received many accolades including winning a Preservation Award from the prestigious Los Angeles Conservancy for its outstanding achievement in the field of historic preservation. KKE provided meticulous, state-of-the-art interior renovations and improvements to the 62,000 sq. ft. historical 1940s ballroom and facility including the latest in technical, production, acoustical, power and HVAC systems; and a 1,156 sq. ft. back-of-house expansion, which also included major roof truss modifications to support its new state-of-the-art sound and light production stage grid.

In Palm Springs, Calif. KKE Architects is the project architect for Gene Autry Plaza, a new \$17.5 million, 60,000 sq. ft. shopping center located at the southeast corner of Ramon and Gene Autry Trail (Highway 111), which will soon celebrate its grand opening with the first ground-up Smart & Final Extra! Store and a Staples, plus 11,500 sq. ft. of shop space including Goody's Café and a drive-thru Starbucks. Investec Real Estate Companies of Santa Barbara, Calif. is the developer.

In Orange County, Calif., KKE Architects has completed design services for a \$22 million, 45,000 sq. ft. senior center in Huntington Beach which is being developed by Makar Properties of Newport Beach, Calif. The new senior center is expected to be opened in April 2011. In Laguna Hills, tenant improvements are underway for a 10,000 sq. ft. Small Claims Court building for the County of Orange's Superior Court of California. CT Realty of Newport Beach is the developer. The project is expected to be completed in August 2009.

"Celebrating 40 years of success, KKE has excelled during the highs and lows of the real estate cycles and has leveraged our experience and capabilities to create a comprehensive portfolio of projects spanning retail, housing, office, industrial, hospitality, entertainment, justice, education and healthcare design," said Arial. KKE's Pasadena office has remained busy with projects in China as well as working with value-oriented retailers in California such as TJX Companies, Smart & Final, and Fresh & Easy. "Things are starting to loosen up a bit and developers and tenants, who previously had been on the sidelines, are now having us finalize site plans," Arial explains.

"Value retailers are taking advantage of dark spaces, good lease deals, and diminishing competition, along with non-traditional users such as child care facilities being used as alternate tenants for retail centers," said KKE Architects' Mark Giles, AIA and Principal.

"We continue to look for opportunities around our office locations because the service and local knowledge can't be matched by outside firms," Arial stated. Presently, in the City of Pasadena, KKE Architects is working on the design and planning of a 30,000 sq. ft. office building; a 100,000 sq. ft. mixed-use development that includes a luxury hotel and 30 for sale residential units built over 15,000 sq. ft. of specialty retail and restaurants; a 40,000 sq. ft. retail infill project on Colorado Blvd.; and several repositioning projects in the City including a grocery-anchored center and a U.S. Post Office.

"Retail renovation is also a strong aspect of our business. KKE Architects has extensive experience helping developers find new tenants for their projects once an existing tenant goes dark. Our philosophy is to be partners with our clients and use our vast network of retailer relationships to help move a project forward," Giles added.

KKE recently completed two repositioning projects in Glendale, Calif., which reconfigured vacant, underutilized retail buildings to accommodate a Home Goods store and Marshalls Shoes at the Glendale Marketplace shopping center and a TJ Maxx at the Glendale Fashion Center. The Glendale Marketplace project had previously been dark for the past couple years. "KKE was able to assist the shopping center owners with sub-dividing the spaces to bring new life to the shopping center. These are just a couple of examples of the many re-positioning projects that KKE is currently working on," noted Arial.

"We have seen many changes in architecture over the past couple years with the coming and going of retail tenants, with LEED buildings and technology, as well as tough economic times that have put the re-emphasis on necessity-based retailers and urban convenience. But the good thing is that with

all of this change, comes opportunities to help our client's visions become reality," Arial added.

About KKE Architects, Inc.

KKE Architects, Inc. is a full-service firm providing a wide range of architectural, interior design and comprehensive planning services. Founded in 1968, this award-winning company has grown to become one of the Top 50 architectural firms in the country. With offices in Minneapolis; Las Vegas; Phoenix; Tucson; Irvine and Pasadena, Calif., KKE's professional staff of more than 150 offers a unique blend of expertise across a broad range of strategically focused market segments encompassing Housing, Office, Retail, Industrial, Hospitality, Entertainment, Justice, Education and Healthcare design. KKE continues to grow through an entrepreneurial spirit and a fundamental focus upon their clients' drivers...understanding their measure of success. For more information, visit www.kke.com.

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