

## Real estate firm Transwestern snares Brooks City-Base pact

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Transwestern has been awarded the real estate services contract for Brooks City-Base on the city's Southeast Side, officials with the firm announced this week.

The scope of work will include leasing existing buildings at Brooks City-Base as well as seeking out developers and end-users for ground leases, land sales and build-to-suit opportunities.

The Transwestern contract marks a critical point in the long-term plan to take some 1,300 acres of land on the city's Southeast Side — land that started life as Brooks Air Force Base — and transform it into a first-class business and technology park.

Over the last year, **Brooks Development Authority** (BDA) — the entity charged with turning the former military base into an economic catalyst — has focused its marketing efforts toward building the Brooks City-Base brand and developing the strategic vision for the business park, explains BDA President and CEO Donald Jakeway.

BDA is “now in a position to implement a very aggressive sales campaign,” Jakeway adds. “With Transwestern as part of our team, we anticipate exciting development activities to occur very quickly.”

The Transwestern real-estate services contract represents the first such contract awarded by BDA.

Heading up the assignment for Transwestern are Russell Noll, Lindsey Tucker and Kevin Roberts. All are with the Central Texas Region of Transwestern, which is located in San Antonio. Roberts is the president of the region, Noll and Tucker serve as managing director and vice president, respectively, in the Central Texas office.

The businesses that BDA is targeting for Brooks City-Base include pharmaceutical firms, health care companies and bioscience/biomedical firms, Jakeway says.

Some of those businesses could already be in Brooks City-Base's own backyard. But many of those opportunities lie beyond the boundaries of not only San Antonio, but Texas as well.

“We needed the services of a nationally recognized real estate organization that had a network around the country that we could use,” Jakeway says.

But along with that national reach, the BDA board — appointed by City Council — also wanted to find a real estate firm with strong local roots, Jakeway says.

Enter Houston-based Transwestern, one of three real estate companies that sought the Brooks City-Base assignment.

In the past year, the Central Texas office of Transwestern has been involved in several key real estate deals in the San Antonio area — including a long-term lease by Minneapolis-based **Medtronic** for The Overlook at the Rim, a 145,000-square-foot Class A building on the Northwest Side that Transwestern initially built on a speculative basis. Medtronic will use the property to establish its diabetes division in San Antonio — which will bring up to 1,400 new jobs to the Alamo City over a five-year period.

“Transwestern sold us on the professional talent they can bring to the table,” Jakeway says.

### Plug and play

Transwestern's brokers won't start the assignment with a blank slate. Going over a quick run-down of the existing buildings at Brooks City-Base, up for grabs on a lease basis is about 160,000 square feet of building space, Tucker says. That figure includes a 75,000-square-foot building that the Air Force plans to vacate over the next year.

These properties can be ready for a tenant very quickly, Tucker and Noll say. In some cases, as with the above-mentioned building the Air Force is vacating, even the furniture is being left behind. It's a property that offers a tenant the ability to simply turn their electronics on and go to work — or as Noll calls it, a plug-and-play building.

There is a total of 2 million square feet of building space, some of which will likely be demolished and the land made available for lease, sale and/or development.

Then there's the economic incentives that BDA can provide — including the Freeport Tax Exemption Incentive Program, Brooks City-Base's designation as a Texas Enterprise Zone and as a Federal Empowerment Zone. BDA can also make available workforce training assistance and financing options for users.

“We have the ability to respond to the needs of any customer,” Jakeway says.

#### **Development pipeline**

The message of Brooks City-Base appears to be getting out to the right people.

To date, the BDA has identified “10 to 12 potential projects, uses that would match our development plan,” Jakeway says.

The goal is to bring in users that will mix well with not only BDA’s long-term plan, but the other businesses that have already made their way to the park — including a 254,000-square-foot research and production complex for **DPT Laboratories** Ltd.

Brooks City-Base also is home to a 570,000-square-foot retail center anchored by **Walmart** and **Best Buy** called City Base Landing

Then there’s **Baptist Health System**, which presently owns a total of 50 acres at Brooks City-Base.

Initial plans for the site call for a hospital that could house more than 70 beds, as well as a multistory medical office building. The facility would replace the existing Southeast Baptist Hospital that is located just a few miles away from Brooks City-Base.

One commodity that will be in demand as more activity comes to the business park: Housing. Tucker points out that a couple of sites in Brooks City-Base are now being marketed for multifamily and single-family residential development.

Brooks City-Base is a work in progress, Jakeway says, “but it is going to be one of the best economic generators we’re going to see on the South Side.”

“We have a good game plan,” he adds. “We’re out selling Brooks City-Base.”