Office outlook: There are still deals to be made

BY BRENNDAUH

It looks like another good year for office tenants shopping for new office space or to expand in their existing buildings. Real estate brokers around the Golden Crescent say landlords are still under pressure, even as the economic recovery boosts residential properties well above average levels.

There are hot sectors, of course, including multi-family and industrial space and land. Economic development officials in Lake Norman and Cabarrus say there is a shortage of shovel-ready land and available buildings for larger companies that want to move here or expand here. About 13 million square feet was absorbed nationally in the fourth quarter, according to Jones Lang LaSalle. The company says 80 percent of the country's roughly 130 major downtown and suburban markets recorded positive absorption gains in the fourth quarter.

Troubled commercial properties are working to attract tenants through the financial system. At Aquila Bank in Cornelius, other real estate owned — essentially foreclosed properties — stood at $50 million at the end of 2013, down 51 percent from $131 million at the end of 2012.

Non-chain restaurants serve up what the market wants

BY DAVID VESSEY

While eateries such as Applebee's, Olive Garden and Carrabba's dot the Golden Crescent landscape, some of the real success stories of the past few years have been reserved for independent restaurants. These are venues that are operated by business people in touch with local tastes and the needs of their customers, rather than the cookie-cutter approach of the national chains.

The recession deepened discretionary spending. As personal budgets went on a diet, consumers opted to eat in rather than dine out, causing a precipitous drop in demand that hit the non-chain restaurants the hardest. Independent operators suffered the most. The total number of restaurant visits in the country fell from 2.27 billion in 2008 to 1.66 billion in 2013, but 87 percent of the hit was in visits to independent operations.

The independent operators who survived are a special breed. We took a look at three of them: Epic Chophouse in Mooresville, Jack's Corner Tap in Cornelius, and Gianni's Trattoria in Concord. All three owners have taken on chefs and menus designed to please the palates of a wide range of diners, combined with attentive help.

When many restaurants come and go, these three demonstrate that a properly run independent eatery with professional care
Keeping up with Facebook; 10 years of Big Day at the Lake

Jan, 2011, feel as if I have gotten the hang of Facebook, with a personal page and a couple of business pages for Business Today and Cornellus Today. I understand what tagging is to mention an eti person of Facebook posting, like so many languages (not that I know), and no private messages on the public walls.

Jan, 22, A study from Princeton University says Facebook will lose 80 percent of its users by 2015. A younger generation of social media mavens is flocking to new social media apps like "Hang with" and "Moments" for the fresh, cool factor and a friendlier environment. I can't even define precisely what an app is, but I can say precisely this I'm not happy. Hang with has grabbed 22 million downloads, attracting young users regardless of its authority and sustainability. The app has also gained favor with celebrities from 50 Cent and Lucy Hale to Paula Abdul and Jamie Kennedy.

Opinion:

Book Review: 'Upgrade'

Many people compromise their standards and settle for a life of second-tier. Consultant Rana Flata shows you how to live the best life you want. "Stay living in a state of "managed dissatisfaction" and "upgrade your life by doing what you love," the interviews with a wide range of celebrities - including tenor music André Assouet-Arca of "The Voice," former mayor of Chicago, John R. Lee, and singer Macy Gray. Despite their different backgrounds, each one achieved success by following seven basic principles of life management. Aloungh Florida's book is sometimes short on facts, the strongest, most practical chapters discuss time management and offers concrete suggestions for tackling life's challenges, curbing your choices, and saying no to people and events that don't add value.-getabstract recommends this book to those seeking to make positive life choices.

Upgrade

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