

Profile

Hands-on describes Unico Properties manager's style

by Jill Jamieson-Nichols

Dan Preisler considered a career in international business – until he got a taste of commercial real estate.

“Real estate is just an incredibly fun and interesting industry for me to work in,” said Preisler, who manages Unico Properties’ 1.5 million-square-foot portfolio in Denver, Salt Lake City and Boise, Idaho.

“Large and prominent buildings have appeal to everybody, and they certainly did to me. I wanted to have an opportunity to manage high-profile buildings that were landmarks in their respective cities.”

When he says “manage,” Preisler means manage.

“I’ve been criticized at times for being a perfectionist and at times for being a bit of a micro-manager, although I try not to be. I really do get my hands involved in all aspects of my buildings.”

“I don’t sit in my office behind a desk all day. I’m a very hands-on manager. I think that’s actually been a good thing for me and my portfolio because, at the end of the day, it allows us to really perform at the highest level that we can in terms of operations of the buildings and their financial performance.”

Preisler came to Denver five years ago to launch Seattle-based Unico Properties’ Denver operations. A nearly 60-year-old commercial real estate investment and operating company, its local properties include Centerpoint II, a 205,000-sf Class A office building at Interstate 25 and Colorado Boulevard. Although the company owns or manages 900,000 sf in Denver, Unico enjoyed a quiet presence here until the recent \$14.6 million cash acquisition of Bellevue Tower in Greenwood Village.

“You don’t survive 60 years in our industry without having a certain amount of investment discipline,” said 38-year-old Preisler. Shortly after it set up shop in Denver in 2006, “The market fundamentals got overheated and out of whack,” he said. “I think there is something to be said about the fact that we had the discipline to walk away from bad deals.”

From Unico Properties’ standpoint, that tide has turned. “I think you’re going to be hearing a lot more about our organization in the near future. We are flexible enough that we can run with opportunities as long as the investment climate allows us to do so.”

Preisler is a University of



Dan Preisler

Minnesota graduate with a degree in economics and a minor in statistics. A Fulbright Scholar, he spent a year in Budapest, Hungary, studying economics, specifically the transition of a communist-planned economy to a free market economy.

During his college years, Preisler’s parents relocated from his native Minnesota to Seattle, and he fell in love with the area. He got a job in operational management with one of the largest parking companies in the nation, Diamond Parking, and ultimately was responsible for 42 locations and 35 employees. Preisler

transitioned into the real estate side, taking on responsibility for acquiring new properties through purchases, leases and management contracts. That put him in contact with Seattle’s commercial real estate community.

“Being in that position, you really get an opportunity to see who in the business is the best,” he said, explaining that he sought out a position at Unico Properties.

“Everybody who I’d been involved with at the company had the utmost professionalism,” he said. “They were high performers and extremely smart players in the industry who really knew their stuff.”

“It’s been a great learning experience and growth opportunity for me. I hope that I’ve been able to make my own contribution to the organization.”

Preisler is the only Unico Properties employee to have relocated with the company twice. “My wife (Caren) has been wonderfully gracious and accommodating in that process,” he said. The Preislers have two children – Ellie, 5, and Austin, 1 ½. Preisler’s parents also relocated to Colorado to be close to the Highlands Ranch family.

Among the properties for

which Preisler ultimately is responsible are Trolley Square, a 330,000-sf shopping mall in Salt Lake, and Centerpoint II, which has 55 tenants, more than any other office building the company manages. He also is responsible for the U.S. Bank Plaza in downtown Boise, a city that has more than doubled in population since 1990. At 20 stories, the building is the tallest office building in the state of Idaho and competes for the best tenants in its submarket.

“It’s fun to manage an asset that is for that market really a trophy property,” he said.

While a Class A office building can be a thing of beauty, Preisler is intrigued by its inner workings, the people who make it work and the people who work in it.

“One of the things I consider myself fairly savvy at and good at is making buildings as efficient as possible and understanding the way they work mechanically. I enjoy working with my engineering team to optimize the operations of the building,” he said.

In addition, “I enjoy spending time with my customers, talking to our tenants and building relationships with them.” ▲

Who's News

H. Brandt Niehaus of Louisville-based Huff, Niehaus & Associates Inc. was accepted as a member of the **International Real Estate Federation**, commonly known by its French acronym, FIABCI. Founded in Paris in 1949, FIABCI links professionals in the real estate industry in a multilingual, multicultural and multidisciplinary network conducting business in countries around the world. The only international real estate organization with representation in the United Nations, FIABCI is considered by real estate professionals and those in affiliated industries to be the leading international real estate association worldwide.

Niehaus is the president at Huff, Niehaus & Associates Inc., specializing exclusively in hotel real estate for 36 years. Niehaus has been a member of Hotel Brokers International for 23 years and participated in more than \$250 million of hotel sales over his career. ▲

Erik Hagevik was named partner in charge of **Holland Development's** Colorado region. Hagevik joins the firm with more than 16 years of development experience in the Rocky Mountain region. His background includes the completion of multifamily residential and mixed-use projects as well as land acquisitions for office and retail. He has been responsible for all aspects of development, including site acquisition, finance, marketing, leasing, investment sales and asset man-

agement.

From 1995 to 2009, Hagevik was vice president of Fairfield Residential in the Rocky Mountain region. During this period, Fairfield constructed and renovated more than 50 apartment properties, totaling approximately 13,000 units, valued in excess of \$1.6 billion. More recently, during 2009 to early 2011, Hagevik worked with local green apartment builder Zocalo Community Development, where he worked on high-density, LEED-certified apartments and mixed-use developments in downtown Denver.

Hagevik is a graduate of the University of Denver, where he received a Bachelor of Science in business administration, dual emphasis in finance and real estate. ▲

Certified public accounting and consulting firm **Richey, May & Co. LLP** recently promoted **Steven D. Putnam** to director of tax services. He is responsible for developing and managing many aspects of the firm’s tax practice.

Putnam, formerly a tax partner, joined the firm in 2008. Putnam graduated from the University of Kansas in 1985, where he earned a Master of Science degree in business, with an emphasis in accounting. He also earned a Bachelor of Science degree in accounting and business administration from the University of Kansas in 1984. ▲

The **Brighton Economic Development Corp.** announced

its **2011 Annual Awards.**

The Regional Partnership Award, which honors an individual or organization that embraces a spirit of regionalism, was presented to the **Metro Denver Economic Development Corp.** for being a vital participant in promoting Brighton and the metro Denver region.

THF Realty, developer of Prairie Center, was honored for furthering economic development in the Brighton area.

The Development of the Year Award honors a project that demonstrates a significant impact on economic development through the creation of jobs and/or through the expansion of the local tax base in the Brighton area. The 2011 award winner was Sable Center, recognizing **Bleeker Vigessaa Brown General Contractors, Sierra Detention Systems** and **Carlson Parkhill** for their work on this development. ▲

Jim Ranson joined **Newmark Knight Frank Frederick Ross**, where he will specialize in corporate advisory services and tenant representation.

With 25 years’ experience in the commercial real estate industry, Ranson has represented companies in the analysis of office markets and acquisition of leased or owned property. He was one of the first tenant rep specialists in the Denver commercial real estate market and has managed accounts for several national and international corporate clients, including US

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Community News



From left are SIOR Colorado Chapter President Murray Platt, CU student Robert Gillis, DU student Jacob Hallauer and chapter Vice President Chris Ball.

SIOR Colorado scholarships awarded

The SIOR Colorado Chapter recently awarded its 2010-2011 scholarships at its monthly luncheon at the Denver Country Club.

Robert Gillis and Jacob Hallauer each received a \$2,000 scholarship in recognition of their academic achievements on behalf of the chapter. The recipients were honored by SIOR Colorado’s president, Murray Platt, and vice president, Chris Ball. The luncheon was attended by 65 people, including SIOR members, guests and sponsors.

Gillis graduated from Colorado State University in

2003 with a degree in marketing and Spanish. He is working toward his Master of Business Administration in real estate and finance at the University of Colorado.

Hallauer graduated from Colorado State University in 2009 with a Bachelor of Science in business administration, real estate and financial planning and a minor in construction management. Presently, he is pursuing his Master of Science in real estate and construction management at the University of Denver. ▲