

Top Real Estate Deals: Apartment projects move in



The \$24.5 million Heights at Delaware Ridge at 130th Street and State Avenue is the first new Wyandotte County apartment project to open in 27 years.

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It became evident that the multifamily sector was the place to invest last summer, when Kansas City's largest commercial real estate firm announced it was plunging into the apartment market.

Block Real Estate Services LLC announced in July that it and its affiliates had embarked on a plan to spend at least \$160 million a year buying and developing apartment projects.

"The capital that's out there from our investors has been screaming to go into multifamily," said [Ken Block](#), managing principal of BRES.

The company's first major foray into the market came in April, when Lenexa City Council approved BRES's \$50 million plan to develop the 552-unit WaterCrest at City Center luxury apartments.

Buoyed by strong renter-by-choice demand that pushed area Class A occupancy toward 95 percent, the market generated a flurry of new luxury apartment projects this year. According to a recent report from [CBRE Group Inc.'s](#) Kansas City office, those projects have filled the apartment construction pipeline with 6,926 units to be delivered by 2015.

Two of those projects, Commerce Tower and One Light, also are highlighted in this section. Following is a rundown of some of the other key projects that advanced in 2013:

Domain at City Center — In September, the Lenexa City Council approved another luxury complex at Lenexa City Center. Construction on the 203-unit project will begin in the spring. Developed by partners [Terry O'Leary](#) and [Steve Coon](#), the Domain will be the third project launched in Lenexa City Center. The first, the 309-unit West End at City Center, opened at full occupancy in 2013.

51 Main — O’Leary and Coon also are involved in development of the \$40 million 51 Main project at 51st and Main streets in Kansas City. The project, which also involves [VanTrust Real Estate](#) LLC, will include 204 luxury apartments.

Briarcliff Riverfront Apartments — In July, [Briarcliff Development Co.](#) announced the second high-end complex in its 600-acre master-planned community near Missouri Highway 9 and Briarcliff Parkway in Kansas City. The \$43 million project will contain 340 units.

Wyandotte County projects — Gold Crown Properties Inc. in December was scheduled to wrap up development of the 228-unit, \$24.5 million Heights at Delaware Ridge, the first new Wyandotte County apartment project to open in 27 years. Meanwhile, NorthPoint Development is developing the 306-unit Village West Luxury Apartments.

The Residences at Burlington Creek — In May, NorthPoint opened the first of seven buildings planned for a 298-unit luxury complex near Missouri Highway 45 and North Cosby Avenue in Kansas City.

Thomas Corrigan Building — In September, an investment group led by developer [Alan Waterman](#) closed on the historic Thomas Corrigan Building in Kansas City’s Crossroads Arts District. It plans to spend \$22 million turning the 10-story building into 82 market-rate apartments. The structure, located on Downtown’s new streetcar line, is named for a 19th century Kansas City streetcar magnate.

Folgers Buildings — In June, O’Reilly Development Co. LLC of Springfield, Mo., announced it had purchased the historic Folgers plant at 701 and 715 Broadway, Kansas City. The plant buildings will be converted into about 160 market-rate apartments.

Beacon Hill — Construction began in July on a \$30 million student housing project in the Beacon Hill neighborhood near the [University of Missouri-Kansas](#) City’s Hospital Hill campus. Located just east of Troost Avenue between 24th and 25th Streets, the complex will provide living space for 245 students. It is being developed by a partnership involving [Zimmer Real Estate Services LC](#), Dunn Realty Inc. and [Taliaferro & Browne Inc.](#)

Other apartment projects announced in 2013 but still in pre-development stages include:

A 112-unit complex that is part of a \$70 million Columbus Park redevelopment plan in Kansas City

An \$18 million redevelopment project led by developer [Mike Rainen](#) that calls for converting the top half of the historic 10-story building at 215 W. Pershing Road, Kansas City, into market-rate apartments

A \$50 million conversion of the former [Ramada Inn](#) at Northwest Tiffany Springs Road and Interstate 29 in Platte County by Meecorp Capital Markets, a family-owned commercial real estate lender based in Fort Lee, N.J.

A \$30 million conversion of the historic four-building Ridenour-Baker Grocery Co. complex at Ninth and Mulberry streets in Kansas City's West Bottoms by Interstate Underground Warehouse LLC

Centropolis on Grand, an \$8 million, 56-unit apartment building to be developed by KC Commercial Realty Group at Fifth Street and Grand Boulevard in Kansas City's River Market

City Place apartment development, part of a \$350 million mixed-use project that a partnership led by BRES is planning near U.S. Highway 69 and College Boulevard in Overland Park. Plans call for more than 1,500 high-end apartments.