

April 5, 2007

Kansas Allen Group president says issues accompany hub

By Kurt Kloeblen

Although he has managed development at the Sprint Campus and Village West, Bill Crandall, Allen Group of Kansas president, said the KC Logistics Hub presents an entirely different set of issues.

The Allen Group named Crandall, 47, president of the Kansas City team in early March. His top priority is managing the KC Logistics Hub, the intermodal logistics park planned near Gardner.

“We’re coming in with a clean slate,” Crandall said. “This is a large, very complicated project that has a lot of moving parts. It will be a significant economic contributor to Gardner, Johnson County and the state of Kansas. It was for that reason there was an allure to a large, complicated project. It’s what really gets my engine going.”

Crandall, a Kansas City area native, graduated from the University of Kansas with a bachelor’s degree in architecture. His professional career started with stadium architecture firm HOK in Kansas City, Mo. After a stint in Chicago, Crandall returned to the Kansas City area in 1996 while working for the Stein Co. Crandall later moved to Zimmer Real Estate, where he managed the Sprint and Village West developments. In 2006, Crandall started a real estate consulting firm, but The Allen Group convinced him to join their team.

“There are items that distinguish this project and give it a lot of similarities to Sprint and Village West,” Crandall said.

“Sprint is 200 acres and it is kind of urban. Village West was 400 rural acres. The KC Logistics Hub is 1,000 acres. In all three there was significant land planning and we’re very much in the process of beginning that in Gardner. Also, particularly with Village West, there was a strong public-private commitment to make it successful. We haven’t gotten into the details of that yet, but in that way I think the two can be similar. This is a third economic event for Kansas.”

Crandall said he is meeting with Gardner city staff and that there is plenty of work going into the project right now.

The Allen Group of Kansas offices will probably move to Gardner by the end of the summer, Crandall said.

Crandall oversees The Allen Group’s foray into Kansas commercial and industrial real estate. Crandall had won the contract to manage the Applebee’s project in Lenexa, which he now brings to The Allen Group.

Crandall said he is learning more each day about Gardner and its history.

“In this instance change will be good,” Crandall said. “We want to be respectful of the day-to-day impact on the Gardner community. It’s not only public finance issues. This will change the fabric of Gardner. We believe it will change it for better. At the same time we want people to enjoy the quaintness of the community. We are mindful of that.”

Crandall, who lives in Leawood, said he has watched Johnson County continue to grow to the south. He said the logistics hub should further that growth and add value to the city.

“It’s going to create a lot of good paying jobs,” Crandall said. “It will also diversify the local economy.”

“One Hundred Seventy-fifth Street and Gardner Road is not as far south as it used to be. That’s through no efforts of ours; the demographic has shifted to the southwest of the metro area.”