

# Fender moving world headquarters to North Scottsdale office

Friday, September 9, 2011, 3:00am MST  
Jan Buchholz - Reporter - *Phoenix Business Journal*

Fender Musical Instruments Group is moving its world headquarters to the Perimeter Center business park in North Scottsdale. The move, scheduled for February 2012, will include \$4.5 million of tenant improvements.

Fender, which makes the world-famous guitars along with other musical instruments and equipment, is leaving its location of 10 years at 8860 E. Chaparral Road, also in Scottsdale.

“When we moved into that facility we had 55,000 square feet. We grew out of that, and now we have 85,000 square feet in three separate buildings. We just need more space,” said Mark Van Vleet, Fender’s chief legal officer, corporate secretary and senior vice president of business development.

Fender leased 110,000 of the 137,000 square feet at 17600 N. Perimeter Drive for 11 years, Van Vleet said. The total value of the deal was not disclosed, but Van Vleet implied that the cost was more than reasonable. “It’s a good market for tenants,” he said.

The landlord is WDP Partners LLC. Its principals — Rob Ward, Jack Rasor, Bob Mayhall, Wally Chester, Brian Frakes and Todd Chester — are former executives of Westcor, the shopping center developer now owned by the Macerich Co. WDP Partners assists Macerich with development sites and has its own development and investment activities.

The two-story building had been the headquarters for First National Bank of Arizona, which was taken over by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. in 2008. Since 2009, the building has been vacant, according to **Gary Gregg, managing principal of CresaPartners, which negotiated the deal on behalf of Fender.**



**CresaPartners’ Gary Gregg, left, and Jason Wery, right,** with Fender Musical Instruments Group’s Mark Van Vleet, center, at North Scottsdale’s Perimeter Center, where Fender is slated to move its headquarters in February.

Jerry Roberts, executive vice president of CB Richard Ellis, represented WDP Partners.

Previous to First National Bank's occupancy, the property had been home to Direct Merchants Bank. That bank was purchased by another company and moved.

Multiple features at the site appeal to Fender, according to Van Vleet, including a separate, dedicated entrance off of Perimeter Drive, a two-story atrium hallway, extensive security and an efficient layout. It was set up as a corporate headquarters and designed for 24/7 operations.

Van Vleet said the tenant improvements, which will be managed by **Jason Wery, principal project management at CresaPartners**, aim to convey a passion for music.

Though sometimes members of the general public show up at the corporate headquarters, the facilities are designed strictly for employees, including a souvenir shop. "It's not a retail-oriented store," said Jason Farrell, Fender's public relations manager.

**Gregg has been working with Fender for about two years attempting to find the right location for the world headquarters. "We looked at this building two years back, but we had a concern at the time that the ownership was not stable," Gregg said. Since then, the company looked at sites in Phoenix, Tempe and Scottsdale. In November 2010, WDP Partners purchased the Perimeter Center property, and that made all the difference. "They are a very solid group," Gregg said.**

Frakes said the property was a good deal by several measures, though he did not disclose the purchase price. "We're familiar with the area. It's a well-constructed building and it told a great story," Frakes said. There remains a 16,000-square-foot remnant with a separate entrance in the back of the building. "It's ready to go," Frakes said. WDP Partners actively is marketing that site, too.

The Fender lease solidifies the company's long-term commitment to the Valley as the headquarters for Fender's executive and administrative functions. The company's manufacturing site will continue to be based in Corona, Calif. Originally, all of Fender's U.S. operations were based in Corona, but about 20 years ago executives decided to move the corporate offices to the Phoenix area.

"The story is that the company was growing. The owners were looking for a friendly environment and they decided that Scottsdale was a great place to live for its quality of life," Van Vleet said.