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Project to have Frank Lloyd Wright inspiration

BY CARI MERRILL

CariMerrill@coloradoan.com

In a world of vanilla, Fort Collins veteran developer Jon Prouty wanted to make his new office campus anything but ordinary.

Redtail Ponds, designed by Prouty's Lagunitas Companies, will bring 76,000-square-foot of class A office space to Fort Collins in a crucial location at the south end of the developing Mason Corridor.

"We've got plenty of plain vanilla on Timberline and on Harmony, and we wanted to do something different," Prouty said Tuesday.

"It was an opportunity to do a very special kind of design with some unique features, and it was an opportunity to put it in this unique natural setting."

The project, which will likely begin construction by the end of the month, will take on a distinctive look, modeled after iconic American architect Frank Lloyd Wright's work, and will include unique features such as below-building parking. Each office will have views of mountains, ponds or private open space.

Prouty contends the project will be the biggest ever to go on the Mason Corridor.

Prouty, president of Lagunitas Companies, is also the developer of the Rooftops on the River town home project in Old Town.

Prouty has heard from prospective tenants, including an out-of-town company interested in a full building and investors looking at grabbing full floors, although no contracts are under way yet.

With Class A product quickly entering the market, there's always the worry of over-saturation. But Prouty says he has a product with appealing aspects and a prime location so he's not too worried.

"We have a segment of the market that nobody else addresses," Prouty said. "Ninety-five percent of the market is competing against itself for plain vanilla, but we have an exclusive. There's nobody else that has the product in our niche."

Michelle Hickey, broker associate with RE/MAX Commercial in Fort Collins, said saturation is definitely a possibility but developers "usually do their homework" and monitor the market. But it could take up to a year to absorb a 19,000 square foot building of class A space if there are no prospective tenants.

Prouty plans to build a new building in the campus roughly every six months, but that schedule will be tweaked depending on how quickly that class A space is snatched up.

The "great location" adds to the appeal of the office campus, Hickey said, with easy access to Interstate 25 from Harmony Road and it's a good alternative to the developments such as those

at I-25 and U.S. 34.

Prouty will also build to LEED standards although he will not seek LEED certification, opting to pass that savings on to tenants.

"I don't like the word 'green.' It's become meaningless," he said. "We want to optimize the comfort of the work environment and then document energy efficiency in terms of savings."
