

CNL Expands Local Presence with CRE Veteran's Hire

By Amy Wolff Sorter



DALLAS-**Tom Goodson**, a 25-year real estate veteran, has joined **CNL Commercial Real Estate**, taking the job of principal in the company's local office. Goodson came on board with CNL a little more than two years after leaving his previous job at **HFF's** Dallas office.

Goodson's departure from HFF involved more than leaving a company – it involved leaving an industry. "I was at HFF for 17 years, and in February 2009, I decided that, with the train wreck that had occurred in the real estate markets, couldn't really be a sell-side guy anymore," Goodson tells GlobeSt.com. "I made the decision to pursue other interests. To take a sabbatical from the real estate game."

Though Goodson had left the industry, he continued to, as he put it, keep his ear to the ground. He explained that his departure from the commercial real estate industry wasn't anywhere near permanent. As a result, when **Jimmy Grisham**, managing director of CNL's Dallas office and a friend of Goodson's, provided an opportunity, Goodson was ready to listen.

"I'd planned to get back into real estate when the timing was right, to take advantage of opportunities that would result from the downturn," Goodson explained. "Frankly, those opportunities came more quickly than anyone thought, especially in the Texas markets."

Those opportunities were why CNL Commercial Real Estate, an affiliate of **CNL Financial Group** in Florida, launched its local operation in Dallas during June, 2010. Grisham notes that these days, CNL is in expansion mode in Dallas in particular and Texas in general. The goal, he Grisham says, is development of a full-service real estate platform with the right people in the right jobs.

Though there is no specific timeline for numbers of new employees or even how many new offices are scheduled to open throughout the Lone Star State, Grisham acknowledges that Houston and Austin are very attractive markets. "But we definitely want to get the Dallas platform built up before building out," Grisham adds.

Along those lines, Goodson will use his many years of experience in commercial real estate to "bring business opportunities to the table for all of us to work on," he comments. Those opportunities, he continues, will include "opportunistic real estate plays" as well as property management and leasing projects.