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New, expanding tenants bring Frontera to 70 percent filled

JEAN KWON

JKWON@BIZJOURNALS.COM | (512) 494-2528

North Austin office building Frontera Crossing has signed a new tenant and expanded another, which combined will add up to 300 jobs.

Electrical engineering and design firm Dashiell LLC will enter the Austin market with roughly 40 jobs and long-term plans for as many as 80, while mortgage industry field services provider Field Asset Services plans to eventually expand its workforce of 400 to as many as 650.

The new leases will bring occupancy at the 165,000-square-foot, four-story Frontera Crossing to 70 percent. The former Farmer's Insurance customer service center was bought and renovated into Class A office space last year by Bethesda, Md.-based real estate company Moore & Associates Inc.

The 20-acre site, at the North Austin and South Round Rock divide, is bordered by Interstate 35, State Highway 45 and MoPac Expressway.

The Art Institute of Austin is the building's third tenant, which occupies roughly 40,000 square feet.

Houston-based Dashiell, which primarily delivers high-voltage electrical substations and transmission lines, will take up roughly 11,000 square feet on the building's third floor.

"We are interested in expanding into a different labor market and perhaps expanding our capabilities to do work in this region as well," says Lonnie Sherman, who will oversee the Austin office. He says immediate plans are to add 43 jobs, while longer term, it could double that amount. Companywide, Dashiell has roughly 200 engineering employees.

Field Asset Services will expand by 28,000 square feet, bringing its space at Frontera Crossing to 67,000 square feet. The Austin-based company secures foreclosed properties for mortgage lenders and banks, which makes it a "countercyclical" business, says David Putman, a principal with Aquila Commercial, which represented Moore & Associates in the lease transactions.

"They are growing faster than they expected to grow. They knew they needed space, but they surpassed what they originally thought they would need," Putman says.

Leasing velocity at Frontera Crossing has been brisk since the building stood vacant last summer, Putman says. The building's proximity to three freeways, two large shopping centers — Round Rock Crossing and the Boardwalk — and the La Frontera mixed-use development has made it attractive, he says. "What we are able to offer has been valuable to these growing tenants that have come into the market."