

Empty acres a gold mine

ConocoPhillips' plans for the former StorageTek campus have t energy firms rushing to be neighbors.

By Margaret Jackson

The Denver Post

Several companies have been scouting metro Denver's northwest office market since ConocoPhillips announced its plans for the former StorageTek campus.

At least two companies have brought a total of 110 employees to the area along the U.S. 36 corridor. Renewable Energy Systems, a wind-energy company, relocated a 100-worker division from Austin, Texas, to 23,000 square feet of space in Eldorado Ridge in Broomfield. Camco Global, which trades carbon credits, opened a 4,600 square-foot office with 10 workers at 390 Interlocken Crescent.

Range Fuels, which converts bio mass into fuel-grade ethanol, recently expanded from 7,000 square feet to 17,000 square feet at Eldorado Ridge, and Siemens AG plans to establish a wind-energy research and development facility in Boulder that will employ 50 researchers by 2013.



An artist's rendering of Granite Properties' and Urban Frontier's 180,000-square-foot building at 575 Interlocken Blvd. Courtesy of Urban Frontier LLC

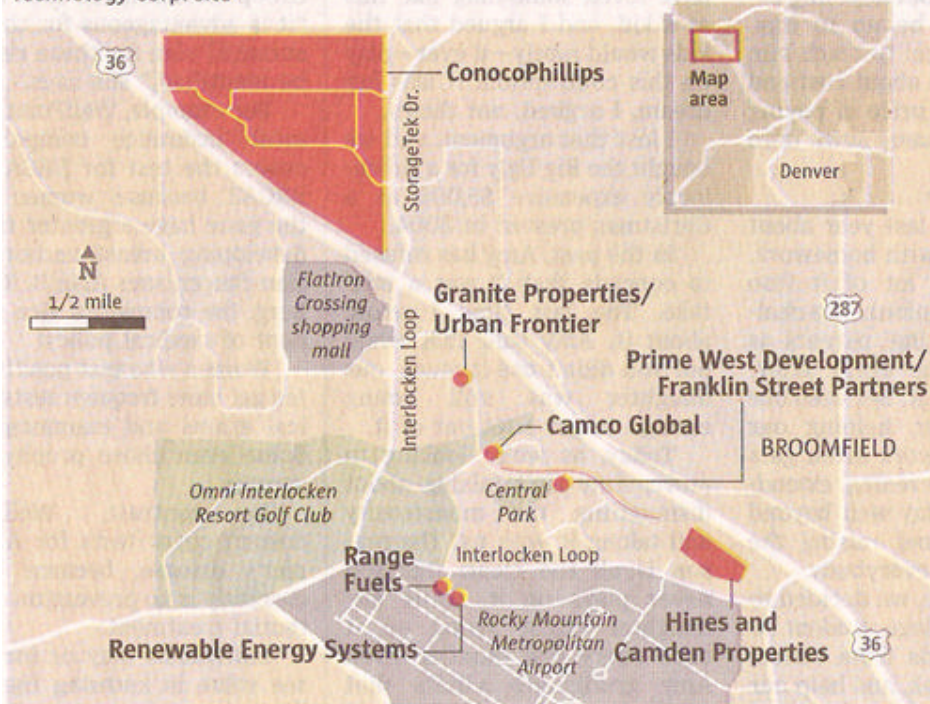
“There's a true belief that the northwest market is going to become, on a national scale, a hub of renewable-energy companies that are going to do research, development, production and management said Chris Phenicie, senior vice president of CB Richard Ellis.

In February, ConocoPhillips announced plans to locate a new global technology center and corporate learning center at the site. It could employ up to 7,000 people when the campus is fully built out over the next 20 years.

If Gov. Bill Ritter has his way, many more alternative-energy companies will follow. Ritter and a delegation, including Don Elliman, director of the Colorado Office of Economic

Growth in the northwest corridor

Renewable-energy companies are fueling growth in the northwest corridor. They're following in the steps of ConocoPhillips, which earlier this year bought the old Storage Technology Corp. site



Development and International Trade; Pam Reichert, director of the Office of International Trade; Tom Plant, Energy Office director; and Jim Lyons, co-chairman of the state Jobs Cabinet, returned Thursday from Spain, where they were working to lure renewable-energy companies to Colorado,

The market already has 7 million square feet developed, but vacancy rates have dipped to the lowest in eight years.

Developers are unveiling plans for office buildings that will add at least another 657,000 square feet of space along the U.S. 36 corridor.

"They can see what's happening with the availability number falling the way it is," said Don Dunshee, president and chief executive of the Broomfield Economic Development Corp. "The base lease rates in some of these areas are inching up a dollar here and a dollar there."

Among the planned projects:

- Granite Properties' and Urban Frontier's 180,000-square-foot building at 575 Interlocken Blvd. The developers also are selling 4 acres to Nylo Hotels, which is planning a 156-room loft-style hotel.
- Prime West Development and Franklin Street Partners' 11-story, 285,000-square-foot tower at 385 Interlocken Blvd.
- Hines' four-story, 192,000-square-foot building at 105 Edgeview Drive, also known as Eastgate. The site can accommodate another five-story, 240,000-square-foot building, and Hines has an option on land where it could build two additional structures, said Charles Elder, Hines senior vice president.

"There are no large contiguous blocks of space, so if you're coming into that market, the biggest space you can find today is about 20,000 square feet," Elder said. "And we are now

seeing a strong demand from tenants to be in LEED-certified buildings.” (LEED buildings meet certain low-energy-use standards.)

Across from Hines, Camden Properties is building more than 400 residential units. A 400,000-square-foot pedestrian-oriented retail center also is in the works.

Two hotels are on the drawing board - a Cambria Suites and a Hyatt Summerfield Suites - on a 24-acre site across from the entrance to the ConocoPhillips site. There also are plans for up to two more hotels, several restaurants and office space.

There are a total of about 1000 residential units under development in the area,

“We were sitting across from a vacant StorageTek facility,” said Phil Hicks of the brokerage David Ricks, which is marketing the property. “Now we’re sitting across from potentially 8,000 employees. I think in 2012, you’re going to wake up and say ‘Hey, this is a pretty good deal.’”

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