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Winners found how to get big real estate deals done

By [Daniel Duggan](#)

Despite news about Southeast Michigan's down real estate market, the five winners of this year's Real Estate Excellence Awards still found ways to get big deals done.

The awards will be presented at the Real Estate Forum presented by the **University of Michigan** and the **Urban Land Institute** on Nov. 7 and 8 at the MSU Management Education Center in Troy. *Crain's Detroit Business* is a sponsor of the event. Winners were selected by a committee that included members of *Crain's Detroit Business* staff.

This year's winners include:

- Jeffrey Bell, first vice president in the Southfield office of **CB Richard Ellis**.

Bell has played a role in some of the area's bigger transactions in the past year.

He was part of a team that successfully leased most of the space in the 240,000-square-foot One Kennedy Square. In September, two tenants were secured for the building, bringing it to 94 percent occupied — a tough task in the Detroit office market.

In addition, Bell represented **Google** in its local real estate searches. He assisted in placing the company in its Ann Arbor and Birmingham office space.

He was also named to the team listing the Pontiac Silverdome and is the lead leasing representative for Stroh River Place in Detroit.

- **Lynn Drake-Batts, senior associate in the Southfield office of UGL Equis Corp.**

Hard work and cold-calling made for a successful year for Drake-Batts.

In September 2005, she was awarded a contract with the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society for managing 100 relocations nationally. She got the assignment on a random call to the company's New York offices.

The same process landed her a deal to move Champion Enterprises' headquarters from Auburn Hills to the National City Building in Troy.

During her time as a planning commissioner for the city of Troy, she helped lay the groundwork to allow in-home day care in the city.

- Collin Hubbell, president, **The Hubbell Group** of Detroit.

At a time when developers were building condos across the suburbs, Hubbell stuck to Detroit.

And his loft project at 460 W. Canfield in 2001 helped start the trend of loft conversions in the city.

Since then, his firm embarked on the 28-unit 55 W. Canfield lofts and the Art Center Lofts at 272 E. Palmer, which will include 80 units when all three phases are complete.

Though it's a challenge to sell in a down market, it's nothing compared with his personal challenges. He is undergoing chemotherapy for cancer.

- E. "Pete" Petrella, CEO of Bloomfield Hills-based **Synergy Group**.

After **Cerberus Capital Management L.P.** acquired **Chrysler L.L.C.**, **Mercedes-Benz Financial** was spun off.

As a result, 600 people needed to be moved into a Farmington Hills building, but only after its 154,000 square feet were demolished and then built-out.

And the project had to be done in eight weeks.

Petrella's team at Synergy got the job done at a speed that impressed most real estate professionals, adding to the list of Synergy's recent corporate relocations. It's part of the firm's specialty of "fast track" projects.

The 165,000 square feet that **Collins & Aikman Corp.** took in Southfield after leaving its Troy buildings in 2006 was another Synergy build-out, along with the 75,000-square-foot **Butzel Long P.C.** office in Bloomfield Hills.

- Matthew Rossetti, president, Southfield-based **Rossetti Associates**.

Taking a drive throughout metro Detroit, it's easy to spot the accomplishments of Rossetti Associates: the Compuware Building in Detroit, Ford Field and The Palace of Auburn Hills.

During the past year, the firm has kept momentum going with projects sure to draw attention once completed.

Rossetti Associates is designing Pavilions of Troy, a 535,000-square-foot mixed-use project planned on the former Kmart headquarters property. In addition, the firm is designing **Belmar Development Group L.L.C.**'s @water (Atwater) Lofts. Rossetti Associates also is the master architect for the Greektown Casino and Hotel, a three-block project in Detroit.

Rossetti has embraced the idea of mixed-use developments as something to personally promote, bringing the vision of the projects to clients.

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