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Columbia Gas of Ohio plans new home in Arena District

Its 650 employees will make the move in 2014

By Dan Gearino
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Columbia Gas of Ohio plans to move to a new home in the Arena District, leaving its current building near the south end of Downtown for what may be the largest new office construction in the area in years.

All 650 employees will make the move, scheduled for 2014, which is when the company's current lease expires.

"Our focus was to stay in central Ohio," said Jack Partridge, Columbia Gas president. "That's the heart of our service territory."

The gas utility is working with Nationwide Realty Investors on the \$50 million project, the companies said today. Columbia will end up with two new six-story buildings located at 240 and 290 Nationwide Boulevard, along with a

parking garage. The site, located between Nationwide Arena and Neil Avenue, is now parking lots.

Nationwide Realty plans to seek a 10-year, 75-percent property-tax abatement from the city of Columbus.

Negotiations on behalf of Columbia were handled by the corporate parent, NiSource, which is based in Indiana. The company looked at several other options, including remaining in the current building, other locations Downtown and locations at Easton and in Dublin and New Albany, Partridge said.

Columbia's current location, 200 Civic Center Drive, is a 14-story building that the company



Rendering courtesy Lupton Rausch Architects Inc.

has occupied since 1983. The company owns the land and initially owned the building, but sold it to a group of investors and then rented the space.

Partridge said he will work with the owners to try to find new tenants. Columbia occupies all of the building's office space. ■