

Trammell takes over Clark Tower

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by [Kate Miller Morton](#)

One month after its \$40 million purchase of **Clark Tower**, In-Rel Management, Inc., has named **Trammell Crow Co.** as the exclusive leasing agent for the 34-story high-rise.

Trammell Crow will continue to lease In-Rel's other two Memphis properties, Lynnfield Office Park and Poplar Towers, but the Lake Worth, Fla.-based private investment firm will assume management responsibilities for all three facilities through a new office in Clark Tower.

In-Rel's Memphis office will be headed by Lisa Ritenour, a former Trizec Properties employee who has managed the tower for several years. Most of Trizec's staff has been hired by In-Rel, which will expand the office staff from six to eight.

In-Rel partner Charles Stein says the company has always been hands-on, leasing and managing all of its South Florida portfolio, which exceeds 1 million square feet.

"We think at this point we have enough critical mass to make that move and the ability to bring the entire Trizec staff into the In-Rel world seems to be cost efficient and should make us more productive at the end of the day," Stein says.

While managing its own property is desirable, Stein says office leasing requires a familiarity with the market In-Rel currently doesn't have.

"You really have to understand the dynamics of that market, and that would be very difficult for us to do and oversee from South Florida," Stein says. "We'd have to have local people and the ability to bring local people on staff, hire them and get them indoctrinated."

Unwilling to make that investment at this point, Stein says In-Rel chose Trammell Crow to lease Clark Tower based on its track record of leasing and managing Lynnfield and Poplar Towers the last 18 months and the level of commitment the company was prepared to offer.

"Trammell's willingness to set up an office on site is going to be a big benefit," Stein says. "I think somebody on site on our biggest property will give us a perspective we couldn't get from somebody just visiting the site and bringing people to the site. That's probably the kicker that brought us over the top."

CB Richard Ellis was the exclusive leasing agent under Trizec.

Trammell Crow senior vice president Steve Guinn was the listing agent for Poplar Towers and Lynnfield Office Park when they were purchased by In-Rel.

"Obviously, this is a big assignment for us," he says. "We wanted to show In-Rel our commitment to their properties."

Beginning early next year, Trammell plans to lease a minimum of 11,000 square feet for its business unit's 30 employees. The company's regional and national accounting operation, which leases 44,000 square feet in Audubon Woods Business Campus, will remain there. Trammell consolidated the two units in Audubon Woods two years ago when it assumed leasing and management responsibilities. The 325,000-square-foot park is 100% leased.

Clark Tower is currently 78% leased, a percentage Ritenour says isn't bad given the mid-year marketwide occupancy of 83%, according to Trammell Crow data, and Clark's large size. Trammell and In-Rel plan to increase occupancy through aggressive rent and tenant improvement packages.

Ritenour says the ease of doing business with In-Rel will also be a plus. The small company will be more hands-on, she says, and able to deal with problems and lease negotiations more quickly.

"It's going to be an added benefit to tenants to have a more boutique owner versus a large national owner," Ritenour says.

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