

# Bird's eye view: MC2 taking over 34th-floor penthouse space at Clark Tower

Memphis Business Journal - February 24, 2006

by [Jane A. Donahoe](#)

Acrophobia is one trait employees at Management Computer Controls, Inc., do not possess.

**MC2** is moving into the 'crow's nest' of Memphis office buildings with the lease of the penthouse floor of Clark Tower.

The company, a developer and marketer of construction industry software, will relocate to the new 10,000-square-foot office later this year.

MC2 will also open its first full-service branch outside of Memphis in 2006 and is currently evaluating office options in the Phoenix area for a sales and training center.

The aerial space at Clark Tower is located 34 floors above Poplar atop the tallest structure in East Memphis. The space was previously a smoking lounge of the **Summit Club** restaurant, and building owner In-Rel Management, Inc., contemplated using it for apartments or a fitness center.

Billy Tedford, MC2 executive vice president, says the space appealed to the company because of its convenient location and striking appeal.

"It is time for a change of scenery," he says. "We thought it was neat being the highest office space in the city, and I think it's going to be fun."

The company surveyed its 36 employees before making the high-rise decision, and company president Kevitt Adler says none of the employees had a problem with relocating within the elevated office. A former private pilot, Adler says he can see planes landing at Memphis International Airport from his new office.

Will Barden with Barden Commercial Realty LLC, who represented MC2 in the deal, describes the space as the "crow's nest" of the building, sitting back about nine feet from the tower's structure walls. MC2 has signed a 10-year deal with In-Rel and will become a full-floor user at Clark Tower, which Barden says adds efficiencies to an office. The company is currently located on two different floors at 5350 Poplar.

"You're sharing the space with yourself and can be more creative in your use of the space," Barden says.

MC2 will take advantage of the move in a rebranding effort, and Tedford says the firm is working on a new logo and marketing strategy. Virginia Norman with The Crump Firm will serve as MC2's office design consultant and project architect.

The company employs 36 people in Memphis and one full-time sales representative in Salt Lake City. The Phoenix office will give them a presence in the western U.S. and will make software training easier for clients who don't want to travel to Memphis.

MC2 has about 1,500 construction companies using its software and its local client list includes Montgomery Martin Contractors, Inman Construction, MCDR, Inc., Caroma Construction, Smith-Doyle Contractors and Barnett Naylor Cos.

MC2, founded in Memphis 40 years ago, is an international provider of software services to construction professionals, most notably in the estimating and bidding process. Less than 2% of its business is conducted in Memphis so being close to restaurants and hotels was important for out-of-town clientele. Adler says most of the clients who come to Memphis for training stay at the **Doubletree Hotel**, which is within walking distance to the new Clark Tower location.

The highly recognizable spot in the Clark Tower's penthouse is an added bonus that was easy on the company's wallet. In-Rel has lowered lease rates and aggressively marketed the building to fill holes left by Gate Gourmet's headquarters relocation and **Nationwide Insurance's** exit.

"It's no secret that we took some big hits in 2005," says Ron Riley, In-Rel director of leasing.

an owner, In-Rel has spent about \$1 million on building improvements, investing in lobby renovations, flat screen televisions in all 12 elevators, a new monument sign, a touch-screen tenant directory and a new restaurant, Tower Room American Grille, where the Summit Club was located.

"There is still a perception in the marketplace that Clark Tower is an old dinosaur and that is not true," Riley says. "You have to see the amenities we have at the price points we have."

Riley is confident 2006 and 2007 will be better years for the building, which stands at about 75% leased. The building's advertised lease rate is \$18 per square foot.

In-Rel has also invested in remodeling the building's eighth floor for smaller tenant offices. The floor was fully occupied by Gate Gourmet, but the owners broke up the space to fit 10 small offices with a common area break room and 40-seat conference room. Seven of those 10 spaces have been leased, and Riley says they are considering "taking the idea up to the ninth floor."

A fitness center is still a possibility, but In-Rel decided it wasn't feasible to have a workout facility on the 34th floor.

The Clark Tower will give MC2 a new identity, Barden says, and is a good fit for both parties. The nine-foot parapet surrounding MC2's new office makes looking out easier to take in.

"It's a weird feeling in some offices when you can just look straight down, but here, we're really looking more out over the horizon," Tedford says.

"The view, of course, is beautiful," Adler says.

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