

Rivergate Tower's Cube sports a makeover

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By Mark Holan, Staff Writer

Dennis Udwin wants to paint the town red.

“Red gets attention,” Udwin said.

He’s talking about the new color flourishes inside The Cube, part of the 31-story Rivergate Tower at 400 N. Ashley Drive, Tampa.

“We wanted it to be bold, to make an impression,” said Udwin, founding principal of In-Rel Properties, which bought the half-empty building for \$22 million last July.

There are new red wall panels.

Red seats at the new Kahwa Coffee Co.

Hip red sofas in the main building lobby.

And come this summer, maybe the red of Republican visitors.

In addition to signing new full-time tenants, Udwin is trying to lure corporate special events and parties to the building during the GOP convention in August.

“It will greatly help us, and it will be major kudos for Tampa,” Udwin said.

Full floors are available with spectacular views of the city in addition to the open space inside the Cube.

Udwin is partnering with Renee H. Dabbs, chief operating officer The Victory Group, the Tampa-based political consulting and marketing firm.

Both were busy this week chatting up media and distributing a snazzy new brochure touting the building.

“What goes around, comes around,” says the marketing copy for the city’s signature cylindrical building.

The package includes tenant testimonials from Joseph Hodges, president of Inetico; Money Weigel, founder, president and chief executive of Northstar Bark; Malio and Derek Iavarone of Malio’s Prime Steakhouse; and Christine Burdick, president of Tampa Downtown Partnership.

Since buying the building 10 tenants have moved in or expanded existing leases, inching up occupancy to about 56 percent, Udwin said. An 11th deal for 8,000 square feet is pending.

Udwin is aiming for about 70 percent occupancy by the end of the year.

The largest new tenant is the Florida Museum of Photographic Arts, which is leasing about 9,000 square feet on the second and third floors for an eight-year term with options. The museum has its grand opening in the new space on March 10 with an exhibit Andy Warhol & Friends.

An invitation-only re-launch for the entire building is scheduled for March 22.

About \$1.5 million has gone into the makeover.

“This building has been misunderstood and misrepresented for many years, Udwin said.