

**INTERMEDICS SITE SOLD**

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ANGLETON — The automatic lights still come on inside a trio of space-age, floor-to-ceiling round glass display cases, each with a dozen smaller glass pillars holding pacemaker parts sold by Intermedics in its heyday.

Only now they belong to someone else.

About 10 years after Intermedics left town and put a for sale sign out front, the five-building, 393,592-square-foot Intermedics campus on 120 acres just north of Angleton has been sold.

Neither the seller, Sugar Creek Baptist Church in Sugar Land, nor the buyer, a partnership named Rulica/Angleton, is revealing the price.

The plan now is to lease and sell parts of the complex on part of Highway 288-B known as Technology Drive.

Billy Hale, who managed the property for Sugar Creek, helped put together Rulica/Angleton, which includes members of his family.

“We’re going to try to get the property back in optimum condition,” Hale said.

THE FIRST TAKER

Hurst Technology, with offices in Angleton, is the first tenant and will move into a multi-office suite in the two-story, 250,000-square-foot former research and manufacturing building. Hurst is in the process of buying the building from Rulica/Angleton, and Hurst will lease out the lion’s share of the structure, the largest on the campus.

It has hundreds of offices, large and small, and includes a dual-level audio-visual presentation room still complete with tables, chairs, a massive viewing screen, television sets and 1990s state-of-the-art electronics.

“This all just came down at the right time and the right place,” Hurst President Tim Hurst said. “We’re in a growth spurt and are taking advantage of it to move in and refurbish the space and help bring the facility back to life.”

It should be a good fit, Hurst Vice President Tim McCreary said. Hurst specializes in automation, technology, networking and security for power-generation plants, industry and public facilities. A recent increase in business and the national move toward environmentally friendly energy fits into the company’s plans and fits with the image of the Intermedics campus, McCreary said.

STILL COMPLETE

Landscaping at the sprawling facility has been maintained by Sugar Creek and climate control has kept mildew from accumulating in the buildings. In the building Hurst will oversee, a cafeteria remains furnished with tables, chairs, a buffet line and television sets.

In a nearby hallway, three glass columns feature the pacemakers made by Intermedics before Guidant bought the company for its licenses and patents in 1998. It then laid off Intermedics' employees in 1999.

Inside the three-story, 60,000-square-foot office building attached by a second-story, glass-enclosed walkway, palm trees reach to the third floor, which is laid with green-and-beige carpet. Polished chrome and glass are throughout the buildings, which very little evidence even spiders found refuge in the well-maintained site.

A worker was busy pressure-washing sidewalks under large trees Wednesday afternoon while crews worked on fountains in two large ponds at the front of the facility. Work will begin soon on a new roof to the three-story building, and renovation also will begin on air conditioning and heating equipment, Hale said.

While there are some plans for progress, the entire business model still is in flux, he said.

"We haven't even put a brochure together yet," Hale said. "The campus was developed for a single purpose and we want to convert it to a facility that can accommodate a variety of businesses, with some modifications. Both of us expect to begin offering office space by the end of the summer."

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

City officials are willing to work with the new owners, Angleton Mayor J. Patrick Henry said. The city had an industrial district agreement with Sugar Creek which is renewable. Under that agreement, in lieu of annexation and therefore taxes, the church paid the city a fee. In 2008, that fee was \$38,412.16.

The city will entertain whatever options the new owners want to explore, Henry said. Having the complex active will be a benefit to Angleton.

"We lost huge water revenue when Intermedics left," he said. "We're more than willing to bend over backward to give them assistance, and always have been. We're going to have to talk with them, but things are in place now that would make it beneficial to them to be annexed. Property tax-wise, development-wise, and water-and-sewer-wise, it's nothing but a win for us if we can get some tenants in."

At its height, Intermedics employed 1,400 people. The facility now will fill a shortage of office space in central Brazoria County, said Debbie Pennington, vice president of operations of the Economic Development Alliance for Brazoria County. Officials also hope new tenants there will mean an increase in employment.

"It's going to open some opportunities that we've missed previously because the facility wasn't dividable the way it is now," Pennington said. "There's great potential to bring jobs to the area, and we're going to work with them to try and fill that up."

A LONG HISTORY

The 120-acre complex was offered for auction last summer and while one bidder met the \$5 million minimum, they weren't able to secure financing, Hale said.

Companies that have looked at the area but couldn't afford to buy the entire campus now are welcome to contact Rulica/Angleton to locate there, partner Mike Latimer said.

"Hopefully we can identify those who need to be in this market area," he said.

Intermedics was founded by the late Albert Beutel in the 1970s. It originally was a pacemaker company located in the old downtown area of Freeport. The company built the Angleton complex and moved into it in 1983.

After Guidant closed the facility, the complex was offered for sale at \$25 million. In September 2002, the price was cut to \$9.9 million.

The Green Dynasty Trust, created by the founder of Hobby Lobby, bought the site in April 2003 for about \$8 million. The trust then donated it to Sugar Creek Baptist Church.

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