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Waterstone purchases \$100 million retail portfolio consisting of 19 shopping centers

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Waterstone Retail Development has acquired nineteen shopping centers in a three package acquisition this past month. The properties are located in Mass. and in the southeast U.S. The transactions closed on December 19th. The portfolio consists of over 1.2 million s/f and is valued in excess of \$100 million.

The first acquisition was a two property package consisting of Brick Kiln Plaza at 99 Chelmsford Rd. in Billerica, Mass. and Applewood Plaza at 315 Middlesex Rd. in Tyngsboro, Mass. Acquisition financing of \$8 million was arranged by Cornerstone Realty Consultants LLC with Eastern Bank. The seller in the transaction was represented by Aidan Murray.

The additional retail acquisitions consist of eleven grocery-anchored shopping centers and major tenants in the portfolio include Fresh Market, Kroger, Bi-Lo(6), Food Lion, Winn-Dixie, Food World, CVS (2), Rite Aid, Beall's, etc. Within the portfolio, twelve properties are located in South Carolina. The remaining properties are in North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama and Florida. Six of the properties were purchased as a package from Equity One, Inc. and eleven were acquired from the original developer, Johnson Development Associates, Inc.

The Fresh Market Plaza, S.C.; Smyrna Village, Tenn; Spring Valley Commons, Columbia, S.C.; Pine Belt Plaza. Columbia, S.C. and Oak Forest Plaza, S.C.

Josh Levy, a principal of Waterstone, said, "Johnson Development Associates had decided to divest its retail portfolio in its entirety and we were able to reach an agreement this summer. We [Waterstone] will continue to grow the portfolio and aggressively look for additional opportunities in the southeast."

Waterstone director of acquisitions and partner, Anthony DeLucia, said, "Our focus at Waterstone, in coming to the Southeast, is to expand our presence in this area of the country and set the stage for future growth opportunities. We specialize in portfolio acquisitions, ground-up new development, and the repositioning of tired assets and this represents a strategic entrance into the marketplace."

"These are ideally positioned assets," Levy said, "located in marketplaces that are established and continuing to experience growth. We see opportunity to maximize these assets through the repositioning and redevelopment of several centers in addition to the development of a large amount of excess land. This also brings in over 150 new tenants to Waterstone and cultivating relationships with these tenants is very important to us. As we improve upon and expand the portfolio, we are committed to meeting their needs, helping them grow their businesses, and increasing their sales volumes."

The transaction was financed by Anglo Irish Bank of Boston, Mass. Johnson Development Associates, Inc. and Equity One, Inc. were represented by CB Richard Ellis' Mike Burkard and Richard Tarquinio, respectively.

"Waterstone did everything they said they would," said Tarquinio. "In an environment where a lot of players are hesitating or dropping deals from their pipeline, they demonstrated the ability to move forward and close effectively."

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