

FUNimation Entertainment scripts HQ move

Anime branding firm is doubling its space

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HAVING A BALL: Gen Fukunaga is president of FUNimation Entertainment, which specializes in rescripting Japanese animation, such as the television show 'Dragon Ball,' for American audiences.

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A branding firm known for launching the popular "Dragon Ball" television series in the United States is setting up its corporate headquarters in Flower Mound.

FUNimation Entertainment signed a 10-year lease for a 48,500-square-foot building in Corporate Ridge, moving from North Richland Hills.

Developed by Dallas-based Champion Partners, Corporate Ridge is a recently completed four-building complex situated on 27 acres in Flower Mound's Lakeside Business District. The deal with FUNimation brings the 475,000-square-foot complex to 36% leased.

The relocation will nearly double the company's space, according to Jackie Smith, a corporate spokeswoman. The company is set to move about 150 employees this fall.

"We'll be able to tailor the interior to our needs, specifically for our production purposes," Smith said.

Since the early 1990s, FUNimation has acquired Japanese animation -- a distinctive cartoon genre that mainly targets adult audiences -- rescripting and rebranding them for U.S. consumers. The company launches and advances those brands and often manages rights such as broadcasting, licensing, production, Internet and home video sales and distribution.

FUNimation first gained traction in the U.S. anime market in 1995, when "Dragon Ball" began airing on the then up-and-coming Cartoon Network. The series became one of the most popular and longest-running anime series on television.

In 2005, Indiana-based publisher Navarre Corp. (Nasdaq: NAVR) acquired FUNimation and at the same time expanded its back-end logistics system to accommodate FUNimation distribution functions, secured more shelf space for the subsidiary's products and launched the FUNimation Channel. The all-anime channel airs over satellite mediums in various metro areas.

Barney Sinclair of Champion Partners, said the new building's layout allowed the company to maintain all of its operations -- general office, a small amount of storage capacity, production and studio areas -- on a single floor.

Rick Medinis of NAI Robert Lynn represented Corporate Ridge in lease negotiations. Damian Rivera of Capstone Commercial represented FUNimation Entertainment.

FUNimation will benefit from a 70% real and personal property tax abatement on the Corporate Ridge building. Flower Mound Economic Development Director Melissa Glasgow said she could not estimate the value of those economic incentives for FUNimation.

"The organization will bring many high-level, creative jobs to Flower Mound, and having a diverse range of companies will create a vibrant corporate environment for the town," Glasgow said.

Flower Mound Mayor Jody Smith said the town created the Lakeside Business District with a vision of attracting quality companies, enhancing its tax base and creating jobs for residents.

"We are confident FUNimation will contribute to us realizing these goals," Smith said.

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