



Reviving Woodward: Increase in downtown businesses marks start of a 'Detroit renaissance'

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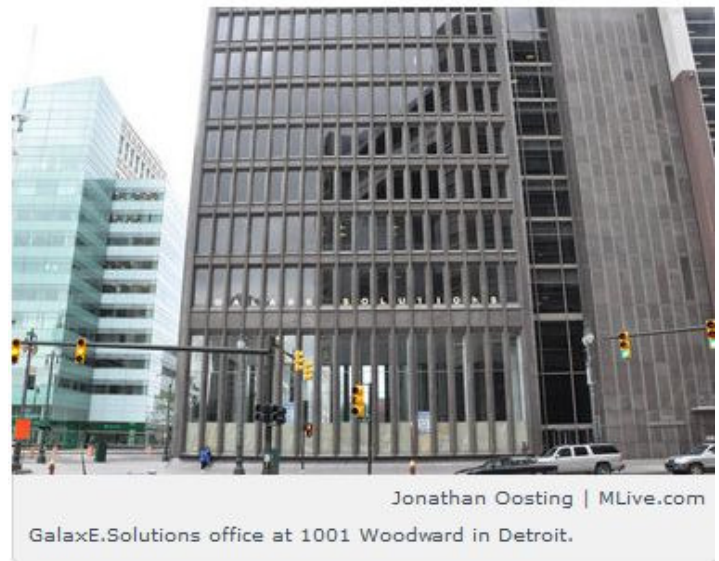
By [Michael Wayland](#) | [MLive.com](#)



When talking about [Detroit's](#) future, Tim Bryan gets an excitement in his voice comparable to a bride-to-be discussing her dream wedding or a sports fan discussing his/her team winning a championship.

"Five to 10 years from now, we are going to be enjoying a phenomenal renaissance of this city," he told [MLive Detroit](#). "People (will be) living, eating and partying in what will be one of the best places in America."

And Bryan -- founder and CEO of GalaxE.Solutions, an IT company in [the process of hiring 500 people](#) in downtown Detroit -- is not alone in believing the city is on the verge of a business revival that will spur population growth and retail business.



GalaxE, 1001 Woodward Ave., is one of numerous companies, including [Quicken Loans Inc.](#) and [Compuware Corp.](#), helping propel Detroit's downtown business district from Campus Martius Park to Interstate 75 on Woodward Avenue.

John DeGroot, vice president of research in the Southfield office of Grubb & Ellis Co., a commercial real estate advisory firm, said the influx of businesses is unlike anything Detroit has experienced in decades.

"The only thing comparable is when Compuware moved from Farmington Hills and built a headquarters downtown," he said. "Downtown rents are low and the occupancy costs are dropping."



According to DeGroot, even through the recession, Detroit's occupancy rate has remained stable, [especially compared to the suburbs.](#)

"What we saw in selecting Detroit was a growing nucleus of a verging IT cluster," Bryan said in regards to choosing Detroit. "The key to success here is you have a cluster of IT firms that are in a major American city that is the most affordable city in America."

The company's hiring spree -- currently ahead of schedule (120 in one year) -- has attracted national attention thanks to Bryan's promotion of "[Outsource to Detroit,](#)" which aims to bring IT jobs back to America from overseas.

Last month, U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development John Fernandez [toured GalaxE's headquarters](#) and spoke to officials at numerous companies located in the emerging IT hub.

"We wanted to learn more about what was happening here; look for opportunities where we can be a better federal partner to accelerate this growth," said Fernandez, who is the point man for President Barack Obama on economic development.

Fernandez, who was invited to visit Bryan, said the government is looking to help regional economies throughout the U.S., and Detroit is definitely on its radar.

Bryan expects 10-12 high-tech companies to move to the city in coming years.

But before a "Detroit renaissance" occurs, businesses must keep moving to downtown; followed by people; and then retail, according to Bryan.

"We need more supermarkets; we need more delicatessens, dry cleaners, delivery services from restaurants," he said, adding many of the services are in the [beginning stages](#) to growing in Detroit.



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