

## Newsmakers 2016: Tom DiChiara & Cairn Pacific

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Tom DiChiara/Cairn Pacific (Sam Tenney/DJC)

In less than two years since **Cairn Pacific** was formed by **Tom DiChiara** and his longtime business partner **Rob Hinnen**, the firm has managed to achieve the kind of success it takes most development companies decades to reach.

The duo's company recently wrapped two high-profile projects – the **LL Hawkins** mixed-use multifamily building and a renovation of a

warehouse core and shell for **Slabtown Marketplace** – on portions of the 25-acre **Con-way site** in Northwest Portland.

"It's been a whirlwind," DiChiara said. "As with any startup, we've had our challenges, but we were fortunate to have LL Hawkins and Slabtown lined up."

DiChiara is an architect by trade, so he handles project aspects – conceptualization, basic underwriting, and oversight of architecture and construction – that place him squarely in a position as the face of Cairn Pacific. But he's quick to point out that Hinnen's background as an attorney and his handling of the financial details of projects along with principal Scott Eaton's business development efforts are critical to Cairn Pacific's success.

"(Our) different skill sets all work pretty well together," DiChiara said.

DiChiara and Hinnen began working together about 13 years ago, handling residential projects for Trammell Crowe Residential. They both eventually joined C.E. John, and helped the company develop a plan for the Con-way site. Plans for three projects on the site were under way, DiChiara said, when C.E. John decided to step away from larger-mixed use developments. DiChiara and Hinnen, however, weren't ready to walk away from the projects.

"We decided it was time to branch out and build our own destiny," DiChiara said. "We had a lot of passion and blood, sweat and tears to make (the projects) happen."

While he and Hinnen are well acquainted the ins-and-outs of development, they still learned some new lessons from the LL Hawkins and Slabtown Market projects.

"It's different," DiChiara said. "When it's your own company and your own money, you look at things differently." Cairn Pacific's forward momentum doesn't show any signs of slowing soon. From an office with just Hinnen and DiChiara, the company has grown to its current staff of six people. The company also is moving forward with its next project at the Con-Way site.

"The next deals, they feel like they've been a long time coming," DiChiara said. "We're getting ready to start up about three months."