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Baptists to build in Grapevine

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GRAPEVINE—Five years after pulling away from the state's Baptist General Convention, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention is building a \$3 million headquarters in what has become a growing office corridor west of Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport.

The group, which has grown from 120 churches to 1,300 churches since its philosophical split with the Baptist General Convention in Texas in 1998, hopes to move to a 30,000-square-foot, two story headquarters at 4500 State Highway 360 in April.

The 4-acre tract, purchased from Silver Tree Partners early this year, is a rectangle with frontage on both roads just back from the corner.

Garland-based C.D. Henderson Inc. broke ground on the \$3 million project July 11, said Chris Bell, Henderson's head of project management. HLM Designs, of Dallas, is the architect.

The convention now occupies leased space in the Regent Place Building in Las Colinas, where the staff has grown to fill a floor of the building. Gary Ledbetter, the convention's communications director, said the organization's 25 full-time staff members will make the move next spring

with plans to increase to 50 employees eventually.

He said the facility also will offer conference and meeting space. In the past, the convention has used local hotels near its Irving headquarters for conferences.

"We're projecting that this will handle our needs for at least 10 years into the future," Ledbetter said.

Ledbetter said the convention began scouting for land last year and focused on the area around Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport.

"There is the central location and we liked Grapevine," Ledbetter said. "We've got employees all over the Metroplex. We wanted to be not too far from where we are right now, and we wanted to be convenient to transportation lines."

Frank Bullock, of Dallas-based Presidio Realty, represented the Baptists. Brett Williams of Silver Tree Partners, Inc. in Dallas represented Silver Tree's real-estate joint venture in the deal. Williams said Silver Tree Partners, Inc. bought the land several years ago, targeting an area that's primed for new owner-occupied office space and not prone to retail growth.

Bell said the structure features tilt-wall construction with a twist. Instead of being painted, the tilt walls will feature brick veneer.



NEW BEGINNINGS: The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, which has grown from 120 churches to 1,300 churches since its philosophical split from the Baptist General Convention in Texas in 1998, plans to build a headquarters office in southern Grapevine.

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