

# CANCER SOCIETY TO RELOCATE

## 650 Workers a Coup for Downtown

By MARIA SAPORTA & WALTER WOODS

Downtown Atlanta got another big boost Tuesday with news that the American Cancer Society is moving its international and regional headquarters to the Inforum building.

The move will bring 650 employees to the nine-story Inforum building, which is owned by Cousins Properties and is located on Williams Street near Centennial Olympic Park.

About 550 employees will come from the society's current headquarters on Clifton Road near Emory University in DeKalb County. The remaining 100 will come from the nine-state South Atlantic division, which is housed in Lenox Park in Buckhead.

Because the American Cancer Society has grown significantly and expects to continue that trend, said Chief Executive John Seffrin, it could eventually employ up to 800 people downtown.

"We are very excited about the move," Seffrin said. "We think we are moving to the very best place we could be. Atlanta has shown itself to be a wonderful place for nonprofits."

Tom Bell, CEO of Cousins Properties, first disclosed the move during a conference call Tuesday afternoon with Wall Street analysts, saying his company had signed a major lease for 274,000 square feet with an unnamed tenant at the Inforum building. The American Cancer Society later confirmed it was the tenant.

The announcement wraps up a double play for both downtown and Cousins Properties.

Last week, Cousins said it has agreed to buy the 191 Peachtree Tower building with plans to move its headquarters there from Cobb County, along with 175 employees.

"It's just fantastic. It's huge," said A.J. Robinson, president of Central Atlanta Progress. "Here is an international organization based in the metro area that's made a decision to locate downtown. The American Cancer Society could have gone anywhere. God bless America and God bless the American Cancer Society."



*The American Cancer Society is leaving its site near Emory University and the CDC for the Inforum (above), which is owned by Cousins Properties.*

The American Cancer Society is expected to lease two floors in the Inforum, including some space being vacated by BellSouth -- the building's largest tenant. BellSouth, which is to be acquired by AT&T, is paying Cousins \$3.6 million to renegotiate its lease and scale down.

"Downtown has been challenged in recent years, and some have been saying the heart of the city may have shifted to Midtown or Buckhead," Cousins' Bell said in the conference call. But with the success of the Georgia Aquarium, new condo towers and hotel rooms, Bell said, "clearly you're beginning to see a revival of the downtown submarket."

American Cancer Society spokesman Greg Donaldson said the nonprofit considered sites across the country as well as in the metro area.

"Our organization scanned the marketplace and came to the conclusion that downtown made the best sense due to a variety of reasons -- access to hotels, mass transit and centralized access to the airport," he said, noting that the Inforum worked well because of its large floor plan and relatively inexpensive office space.

Atlanta Mayor Shirley Franklin is expected to hold a news conference this afternoon to comment on the move.

The American Cancer Society has about 7,000 employees across the country who support about 3 million volunteers. One of the largest nonprofit organizations in the world, it moved its international headquarters from New York City to Atlanta in 1988 after a rigorous competition among 10 cities.

To make the deal happen, Emory University and the Robert W. Woodruff Foundation donated 4.5 acres of land across from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The foundation also contributed \$1 million to help pay for moving costs.

As part of the transaction, Emory University has agreed to buy the American Cancer Society facilities on Clifton Road for several administrative units, according to Emory spokeswoman Nancy Seideman. She said the society can occupy the building until June 2007.

"We are going to take the proceeds from the sale of the building and use that to fund our operations in the Inforum for a number of years," Donaldson said. He did not disclose the terms of the Inforum lease or the sale price of the society's existing headquarters.

The American Cancer Society's headquarters building on Clifton Road originally housed fewer than 300 employees in 155,000 square feet. Today, the society has squeezed in about 550 employees, and there is no more room for growth.

When the society said in February that it needed to move, Donaldson described conditions as "extremely urgent" and "reaching the crisis stage."

The American Cancer Society move follows the relocation of the administrative headquarters of Habitat for Humanity to downtown Atlanta earlier this year. Habitat, however, is keeping its operational headquarters in Americus in South Georgia.

Other major nonprofit organizations headquartered in Atlanta include CARE, the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the Arthritis Foundation.

After a series of major tenants leaving downtown in the past several years, CAP's Robinson said downtown is on the upswing.

"We are having a very good month," he said. "Hopefully this is the beginning of a long-term trend in the business and nonprofit community that is seeing the value of being located downtown."