

LifeWay offer for new Nashville site accepted

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NASHVILLE (BP)—[LifeWay Christian Resources'](#) offer to purchase 1.5 acres in downtown Nashville for a new office building has been accepted, the Southern Baptist publishing house announced July 21.

The city's Metro Development and Housing Agency, which owns the property, unanimously approved sale of the site for \$12.7 million, with a tax incentive of \$4.9 million that can fund specific aspects of the construction, effectively reducing the purchase cost to less than \$8 million.



Thom RainerMeanwhile, LifeWay is moving toward completing the sale of its current 14.5-acre campus, with more than 1 million square feet of office space, to a consortium of local and national developers later this summer. Buyers have not released the sales price of LifeWay's present facilities.

New building still being designed

LifeWay's new building, located one mile across downtown Nashville from the present campus, will encompass 216,000 square feet. The number of stories of the facility is in the design process.

The new location is a few blocks south of Nashville's Broadway District—a popular shopping and entertainment area—and across the river from Nissan Stadium, home of the NFL's Tennessee Titans football team.

The new location “will be exciting for our employees and visitors and will provide us opportunities to serve the millions of people who work, live and visit Nashville's central business district each year,” LifeWay President Thom Rainer said in a letter to employees.

Plans to break ground this year

The project's construction contractor and architects already have started engineering and environmental studies on the property, Rainer said. If all goes well, he anticipates closing on the new location early this fall. LifeWay plans to break ground this year on the new facility slated for completion by late 2017.

Last August, LifeWay began a preliminary feasibility study last for selling its campus to relocate to facilities better suited to the agency's future.

Much of LifeWay's current campus is outdated, Rainer said, noting many of the buildings were built in the early 20th century and are not designed for modern technology or collaborative work.

About 1,100 LifeWay employees are based in the downtown offices and will move into the new building. LifeWay also operates 184 LifeWay Christian Stores in 29 states and a national conference center in Ridgecrest, N.C., with more than 4,000 total employees.

LifeWay has contracted with Gresham, Smith and Partners in Nashville to design the new building, with Bell & Associates Construction in Brentwood, Tenn., managing construction. Compass Partners in Brentwood will help LifeWay manage the project, serving as the owner's representative.

LifeWay was founded in 1891 in Nashville as the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.