



# BG GROUP

## MAKING A NAME FOR ITSELF DOWNTOWN

BY BARBARA HENSHAW

If you work or live downtown, you're starting to see the BG Group name all over the place: on the stylish new 46-story building at 811 Main, on signage in the tunnels and soon on the side of seven new downtown buses.

But what is BG Group? It explores, produces and markets natural gas and oil around the world. The Houston office is focused on exploration and production, liquefied natural gas shipping, energy marketing and technical support.

"We have a very significant business in Houston, but unless you're an industry insider, you may not be that familiar with us," said Mike Mott, senior vice president and general manager of strategy and implementation.

Houston is the energy capital of the world, and relocating recently from its Galleria offices to downtown puts BG Group adjacent to its industry peers in the Central Business District.

"Houston is a place you need to be to do business in the energy industry," Mott said.

And since coming downtown, BG Group has been making itself known in the neighborhood. Its offices are in the building that bears its name, BG Group Place, and it is partnering with the Houston Downtown Management District and Houston First Corp. to bring a free bus service to downtown in May 2012.

Called Greenlink, the eco-friendly buses run on compressed natural gas, making them a cleaner transportation alternative.

"We are a world leader in natural gas with a growing presence in downtown Houston, which makes our partnership with the Downtown District and Houston First Corp. a perfect fit," said David Keane, vice president of policy and corporate affairs.

"One of the reasons we chose downtown for our new Houston office is that Metro and other transportation connections make commuting easier and more economic for our employees," he said. "From our perspective, Greenlink makes a good downtown transportation infrastructure even better."

Consideration for their employees' needs is something that BG Group officials kept in mind when it relocated.

The company moved its 600-person staff from the Galleria area into its new downtown building in August. Finding a place to suit the company and its work force, which had grown from just a handful of employees 10 years ago, was something BG Group's leadership, under the direction of Martin Houston, took to heart.

"We were bursting at the seams," said Mott of the former facility. "We had to get a building that was representative of our size and business ventures."

BG Group leased 13 floors, or 350,000 square feet, of the property, building out nine floors and leaving room to grow into the other four, Mott said.

"I like how open it is," said Carli Smith, Health, Safety, Security and Environment coordinator, who acknowledged moving downtown has had some definite benefits: the variety of places for lunch, the tunnel system, the farmer's market in front of City Hall on Wednesdays, Discovery Green, the Metro rail.

And one of the perks of being in a skyscraper? "I love my view," she said, looking out the window north onto Main Street from her desk on the 32nd floor.

Mott agrees that the move has had a positive impact on employees. He said the responses

▶▶▶ BG GROUP PLACE HAS BEEN CERTIFIED AT THE PLATINUM LEVEL UNDER THE U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL'S LEED FOR CORE & SHELL RATING SYSTEM. EVEN MORE NOTABLE, BG GROUP PLACE IS ONE OF ONLY THREE BUILDINGS IN THE WORLD TO BE CERTIFIED LEED PLATINUM FOR C&S OUT OF 3,373 TOTAL BUILDINGS REGISTERED FOR C&S.



they’ve received range from “My drive downtown wasn’t as bad as I thought it would be” to “There are so many places to eat and so much to do.”

“I am seeing groups of individuals staying in town and doing things at night,” Mott said. Those kinds of after-work outings can only help build teamwork – forming a bond that will carry over into their work, he said.

Real estate developer Hines worked with BG Group to ensure its new building was fitting for the growing company. Coincidentally, the common areas that Hines already had developed went very well with BG Group’s idea of clean, modern lines – and the color palate just happened to complement the energy company’s orange and gray scheme.

“The Hines management is top shelf,” Mott said.

Helping to turn the company’s workspace vision into reality were PDR, its interior



room and a large-screen TV that shows visitors what BG Group is all about.

Further into the work areas, the managers’ offices are in the center of the building, giving the outer perimeter – the desks with the panoramic city views – to the rest of the work force. And the employee lounge – too big and comfortable to be called a break room – has soft seating, great views and a

Group’s offices, they are shown where emergency exits are and what to expect if an emergency alarm is sounded. In conference rooms, a deck of cards with safety messages is on the table. Before a meeting begins, a card is drawn from the deck, and a safety reminder is shared with the group.

“Our biggest desire is that you come to work and leave work safely,” Mott said.

**BG GROUP’S AMERICAS AND GLOBAL LNG BUSINESS**, HEADQUARTERED IN HOUSTON AND MANAGED BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MARTIN HOUSTON, INCLUDES SOME OF THE UNITED KINGDOM-BASED COMPANY’S KEY ENERGY BUSINESSES, INCLUDING LOWER 48 EXPLORATION AND PRODUCTION, LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS SHIPPING AND ENERGY MARKETING. HOUSTON ALSO IS A SECOND HUB OF BG ADVANCE, WHICH PROVIDES STRATEGIC AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT.

architect, and SpawMaxwell, the general contractor.

“I can’t say enough about the professionalism of those two companies,” Mott said.

The end result has a modern, open feel with eclectic touches – a Brazilian mask here, a ship model there, a cross-section of shiny pipe in an art niche. In the reception area are low-slung gray chairs, white marble with slate floors, floor-to-ceiling windows that allow natural light to wash into the

workout room.

At the heart of it all are signs and reminders that underscore one of the company’s core values: safety.

“Safety is a state of being,” Mott said. “It’s not something you turn off or turn on.” He said this message starts at the top of the company with Sir Frank Chapman, chief executive of BG Group, and is a cornerstone of how the company does business.

When visitors come for meetings at BG

**BG GROUP AT A GLANCE**

**HEADQUARTERS:**  
United Kingdom

**KNOWN AS:**  
A world leader in natural gas

**WORLDWIDE EMPLOYEES:**  
6,000

**EMPLOYEES IN HOUSTON:**  
600

**HOUSTON OFFICE:**  
BG Group Place at 811 Main  
between Walker and Rusk

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:**  
Martin Houston

**REGIONAL MANAGING PRINCIPAL:**  
Jim Furr

**WEBSITE:**  
bg-group.com