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By [Robert Carr](#)



Former Joliet Circuit City

LEMONT, IL-Englewood Construction, based here, has begun work on six projects in the Chicago area, and the firm's president said he expects the work to increase this year. Bill Di Santo says there's been an uptick in retail construction bidding activity, and tenant expansion plans are finally being taken off ice.

Englewood has started construction on a new O'Reilly Auto Parts store at 820 E. Roosevelt Rd. in Wheaton, a new Advanced Auto Parts store on Northwest Highway in Crystal Lake, a new Armani store on the fifth floor at Water Tower Place in downtown Chicago for General Growth Properties, a Charming Charlie store at Fox Valley Shopping Mall in Aurora for Westfield, and a small Mrs. Fields/TCBY Yogurt at Westfield Old Orchard in Skokie.

The company is also building one of the 11 hhgregg electronics stores that are opening soon in the Chicago area. The Indianapolis-based retailer has purchased a few of the former Circuit City stores and is establishing a Chicago presence. Englewood is working on the hhgregg site at 3150 Tonti Dr. in Joliet, near the Louis-Joliet Mall.

Di Santo tells GlobeSt.com that he thinks 2012 is going to hold even better times for retailers in the Chicago area. "They need to build and expand, they've sat on their hands for the past two years, they realize now is the time to do something," he says. "The competition is also getting tougher, and retailers are making decisions quicker. We just have to make sure we can rise above all the new construction competition – we've seen a lot of former homebuilders come into the business and think building stores is the same as houses."

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