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Willow Gardens

COVINGTON, LA-**Stirling** Communities I LLC, a group of investors led by locally based **Stirling Properties Inc.**, has closed its first multifamily transaction, obtaining four apartment complexes totaling 370 units in two separate transactions. The buyer paid \$17 million for the assets, and is on the lookout for more.

Three of the class B assets are in Lafayette: Willow Gardens at 101 Gloucester Rd.; Acadian Gardens at 710 S. College Rd. and South College at 915 S. College Rd. All three were sold by a Lafayette-based multifamily developer.

The lone Baton Rouge asset, Coventry Terrace, is at 3033 July St. Though Coventry Terrace, sold by local group South Coventry LLC, is student-specific housing serving Louisiana State University, the other three are less than a mile away from University of Louisiana Lafayette. Stirling Properties is the portfolio's asset manager, while Des Moines, IA-based BH Management is taking on the role of property manager.

"Stirling has been active throughout the Gulf South region during the past year, and is starting to look out for opportunities on the multifamily side," explains J. **Ryan Lang**, Stirling Properties' commercial sales executive/multifamily investments, who brokered the transaction. "Multifamily is an asset class Stirling is focusing on, mainly because of demographic and economic trends in the region."

Lang tells GlobeSt.com that the assets in Lafayette attracted close to a dozen offers during the marketing process, whereas Coventry was a direct deal. "We took it straight to the group and they bought it," Lang notes.

The assets were built in the early 1970s and occupancy across the portfolio is above 90%. Lang says the new owners will invest around \$1 million in capital improvements, while two of the Lafayette assets will receive name changes. Acadian Gardens and South College will be renamed South College I and II, with one management team taking care of both properties.

With these transactions now closed, Stirling Properties is looking for more investments, with a focus on multifamily. Lang says the company has closed approximately \$100 million in acquisitions during the past year, with its flagship purchase being the 673,000-square-foot Pan-American Life Center at 601 Poydras St. in New Orleans, which it acquired in December 2010 for approximately \$70 million.