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Billboards Push Fan Pier Offices

BY SCOTT VAN VOORHIS

Fan Pier developer Joseph Fallon has unleashed an unusual marketing blitz - featuring billboard ads aimed at office tenants - as he prepares to break ground on the giant waterfront project this fall.

Fallon has begun renting out billboards across the city aimed at creating a buzz in the office market. The ad features a man seated in an office chair and juggling a baseball while in front of a computer. The slogan next to him: "Find Yourself at Fan Pier, Amazing Offices."

The billboards have gone up in the Financial District, near Fenway Park and at the Fresh Pond rotary in Cambridge, with others planned for the Expressway and the Massachusetts Turnpike, among other locations.

Fallon bought the Fan Pier site with partner Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Co. for \$115 million in 2005. Planning a nearly three-million-square-foot mixed-use development, Fallon recently opened a sales office on the site.

To drum up interest, he's even planning to anchor a hot-air balloon to show off the waterfront site's spectacular harborside views.

"We are being true to our commitment to get it started," Fallon said.

The veteran waterfront developer, who built the headquarters hotel for Boston's new convention center, now seeks to break ground on the long-awaited project's first building - a 500,000-square-foot office high-rise - in either September or October. The launch is expected to be a landmark event, kicking off a showcase waterfront project first conceived a quarter century ago, but beset by a string of epic controversies and setbacks.

While he is prepared to begin work without any tenants lined up, Fallon predicts a number of deals with various office tenants will be ironed out by the time construction begins.

Fallon said he plans to begin work on a condo/hotel high-rise in the spring, with other buildings to follow.