

THADDEUS WONG 34
Principal
@properties LLC

Thaddeus Wong is the highest-grossing residential real estate broker in Chicago. Now, he and his @properties LLC are looking to the suburbs.

Indeed, Mr. Wong is a young man in a hurry. Since he co-founded Chicago-based @properties in 2000 with partner Michael Golden, the firm has become one of the top half-dozen residential brokerages in the city, with 2002 transaction volume of \$244 million and on track to double to almost \$500 million this year. Mr. Wong's sales volume alone was \$117 million last year. He sells a house nearly every day, all year long.

Not bad for somebody who fell into real estate. A native of Minneapolis, Mr. Wong wanted to trade commodities on the futures exchanges here, but he became disillusioned while clerking at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange when he was a student at Loyola University.

"I decided that the Merc was too isolated a world for me," Mr. Wong recalls. "I had a friend who was doing a loft conversion, and the construction and marketing process really interested me."

He got his start selling houses in the Bucktown neighborhood in 1996 for Property Consultants Inc. His timing was perfect: Bucktown was coming



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alive with yuppies looking to buy their first homes.

Development firms soon came to depend on Mr. Wong to sell their projects en masse. Michael Zucker, a partner in Chicago-based Peak Properties LLC who has worked with Mr. Wong, is converting an old Evanston apartment building to condos, and has given Mr. Wong the 25-unit listing. Says Mr. Zucker: "If we put up new units and they're priced wrong for the market, he isn't afraid to tell us. I like that."

Growth may come on other fronts, as Mr. Wong considers entering commercial brokerage.

"We'd like to hit \$1 billion in (overall) transaction volume by 2005. We think we can do that," he says.

H. LEE MURPHY