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Tragic: Seven Pebb Employees Die in Plane Crash

By Jennifer LeClaire | Miami

MIAMI—Tragedy has struck a Boca Raton, FL-based commercial real estate investment firm. Seven employees from Pebb Enterprises have died in a plane crash in Akron, Ohio. Two others were also killed in the crash. There were no survivors.

The names of the Pebb employees were not released. However, family members told Ohio State Police that executive Diane Smoot was on the flight.

“Our hearts are broken this morning with the news of the tragic accident that took the lives of two principals and five employees of Pebb Enterprises,” the company said in a statement. The firm could not be reached for further comment.

“We are shocked and deeply saddened for the families, colleagues and friends of those who perished,” the statement reads. “Our first priority is to give our fullest support to the family members and loved ones of our co-workers. We ask for the media’s understanding and cooperation at this time of unimaginable loss and mourning and are not responding to media requests at this time.”

Pebb is a full-service, vertically integrated private equity real estate investment company that specializes in the development, construction, acquisition, ownership and operation of commercial properties with an emphasis on high quality, neighborhood, regional and power shopping centers. All told, Pebb owns and operates a portfolio of over 2 million square feet of commercial properties across the United States.

Steve Marks, managing partner at Miami-based litigation boutique Podhurst Orseck who specializes in aviation litigation, tells GlobeSt.com that when a tragedy such as this occurs, after the family gets over the immediate shock, they will be left with questions as to the cause of the crash. At this stage, he says, there is little reported information to reach any determinations as to the cause but given my experience with other airplane crashes, the likely focus will be on operational and mechanical issues, but obviously everything needs to be considered.

"Certain information will soon be available such as the air traffic communications, witness statements and radar data which could provide considerable insight into the cause," Marks says. "For the families to obtain any answers, they will need to engage experts who deal with these tragedies and who have the resources and experience to conduct an independent investigation."

On the development front, [Pebb Enterprises](#) is currently working on Buckingham Plaza, a 90,000-square-foot shopping center in Wellington. It is already 90% pre-leased, with TJ Maxx and Michaels as anchors. In Fort Lauderdale, Gatlin Development is nearing completion of Riverbed Marketplace, a 310,000-square-foot development anchored by Walmart and Planet Fitness.