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## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Making Your Storage Experience Trouble Free...

## Stadium Storage

## ST. LUCIE WEST, FLORIDA

BY POPPY BEHRENS

## QUICK FACTS

**Owner:** Jim Martin**Size:** 80,000 square feet**Number Of Units:** 500**Climate Control:** 50%**Occupancy:** 80% After Expansion

Located on the Treasure Coast of Florida, St. Lucie West is one of the fastest growing areas in the state. It is a beautiful community with hundreds of acres of lakes, championship golf, a major league baseball stadium, and beautiful homes in small town neighborhoods. It is here, directly across the street from the Thomas J. White Memorial Stadium, the spring training home of the New York Mets since 1988, that you will find Stadium Storage—a unique self-storage facility that is well-known for its exceptional customer service.

**Designing It Right**

Jim Martin, owner of Martin Self Storage Centers based in North Carolina, helped design Stadium Storage for his best friend who later ended up selling his interest in the site to Martin, creating a partnership with Team Construction and Development located in Stuart, Fla.

"I bought into the first phase and the office," says Martin, who explains that much like the community of St. Lucie West, this facility has continued to grow. "Since entering this endeavor, we have doubled the size of the site by acquiring an acre-and-a-half at the rear of the property and adding onto the facility."

As a result of the expansion, the facility that was 30,000 square feet when it opened and housed 250 units now encompasses approximately 80,000 square feet with 500 units. And as if that isn't enough, Stadium Storage (now a subsidiary of Martin Self Storage) has even more room to grow. You see, Martin (who presently owns seven facilities—most of which are in North Carolina—and is in charge of operational and design matters) and Team Construction and Development (which is in charge of the construction) has also acquired an additional three-and-a-half acres adjacent to the site, which offers plenty of room for potential future expansions.

Part of Martin's success lies in the fact that he builds his facilities to blend into the surrounding neighborhood. "I tried to go with a definite Floridian look on this project," he says, adding that he has three new Florida facilities in the planning stages now and has adapted that look for those as well. "The facility has a very clean appearance and is easy flowing in terms of traffic. We have one entrance that is designed for coming into the facility and one that is designed for going out—and it was built to accommodate big 18-wheel trucks."

Hands on design is important to Martin. As such, he creates his own unit mix at each facility by taking into consideration what unit sizes he is currently full on and then designing the interior unit mix to facilitate what he thinks he will need based on the data that he has. He also pays careful attention to the retail areas in each store, which usually take up anywhere between 800 and 1,000 square feet. Adding to the facility's individuality, all retail products are private labeled—this includes the usual boxes, tape, and packing supplies, as well as humidity control products, boat and RV covers, screwdrivers, and flashlights.



### Customer Convenience At Its Best

When it comes to security and keeping tenants' goods safe, Stadium Storage makes it a priority. The facility has all of the bells and whistles including computer controlled access and state-of-the-art digital video surveillance. Furthermore, while this is the only one of Martin's facilities that does not utilize individual door alarms, Stadium Storage has gone to using only theft-resistant cylinder locks on its units.

Again, with customers in mind, Stadium Storage goes to great lengths to meet the needs of its tenants. First, the site has seven-day-a-week access to meet not only the demands of its residential customers but also those of its commercial tenants. "We have mostly residential retirees," Martin explains when describing his tenant base at this facility. "But we also have a mix of commercial tenants because we back up to Interstate 95." Those business customers include snack vendors, pharmaceutical reps, and a communications company.

Above all, when it comes to clean, Stadium Storage boasts more than just a look. "We have a very experienced resident management couple and assistant that always keeps the facility very clean and presentable," says Martin. "I am amazed at how well they really do. I mean they really keep it clean; you can walk any one of those hallways or units and could eat off the floor."

Martin explains that his managers try to be as diverse as they can in meeting the needs of customers. For instance, in addition to sending a thank you note to each new tenant, they also use referral cards which help to attract new business. The facility also has a moving truck that tenants can use for free when moving into their unit—an amenity that also helps advertise the business while it is being driven around town.



### Share The Load

Perhaps the most unique aspect of Martin's self-storage business is what has come to be called the Share the Load Program. "The manager at each store is assigned a specific task," he explains. "For instance, the managers at Stadium Storage do Internet research, I have another store that orders supplies, another that handles audits, and one that generates the weekly reports and gives them to me."

This unique sharing of management duties distributes responsibilities among stores while freeing managers up to deliver exceptional customer service that sets them apart from competitors. Thanks to this highly focused method of operation that gives tenants trouble-free storage, Martin says that his company receives a lot of complimentary letters. "As a result of being more expensive than our competitors, we expect the best from our managers," he explains, "and we want to give superior customer service."

Combining great service with outstanding curb appeal has indeed created another exceptional self-storage location for Martin whose first self-storage facility was the 1995 Mini-Storage Messenger Facility of the Year winner. "I like to design a facility with an inviting appearance," he says. "I want to give my customers a reason to walk in the door." With occupancy levels hitting the 80 percent mark after its recent expansion, Stadium Storage definitely meets that criteria.

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Poppy Behrens is the executive editor of the *Mini-Storage Messenger*.

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