

World Trade Center 1 rises to 100 stories, nearly tallest in city

Maria Alvarez



A construction worker looks up at One World Trade Center

World Trade Center 1 has reached the 100th floor - one story away from being taller than the Empire State Building, the tallest building in the city.

Ten years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, World Trade Center 1 is expected to be completed at the end of 2013, or the beginning of 2014, said Steve Coleman, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey spokesman.

Fifty-five percent of the building's office space has been rented, said Coleman. Condé Nast, magazine publishing giant, signed a 25-year lease at an estimate of \$2 billion.

The building's other tenant is Chinese real estate investment firm Vantone Holdings, which "provides upscale business spaces for high-profile Chinese and international companies," according to its website.

Office space inside World Trade Center 1 will only reach the 90th floor, said Coleman. Floors 90 to 100 is reserved for air conditioning, heating and electrical equipment.

Floors 101 and 102 will be the observation decks. Once the building's antenna is built WTC 1 will be the tallest building in the city surpassing the Empire State Building, he said.

Out-of-town visitor Annie Smith, 37, of Maryland, was standing at the foot of 1 World Trade Center snapping photos of the raising glass tower.

"It's awesome and beautiful," said Smith, whose husband is serving a second tour in the Army. "Our sole focus was to come here and see the World Trade Center and it's progress.

"It means a lot for us to be here and it makes us happy to see the building," said Smith, whose husband is scheduled to come home in May from Afghanistan.

"I spoke to my husband this morning and he wanted to see lots of pictures. You know, he went into the Army because of 9/11," she said. "And today it's important that our sons come here and see Ground Zero."

Stefan Sordyl, 56, of Port Jefferson, a concrete foreman at the Ground Zero site, said the 100th floor milestone is bitter sweet.

"It's a great accomplishment, but I work at Tower 2 and I'm being layed off," he said. Tower 2, a Silverstein property, will complete ground floor construction of the building by the end of the year. The building was supposed to be 88 floors.

"They can't find anyone to rent the space to," said Sordyl, who has been working at the site for two years. Sordyl said he remained hopeful that the economy will turn around and construction will resume to its original plans.

Dara McQuillan, spokesman of Silverstein Properties, said the building has until the end of the year to find a tenant. He said Tower 4 which is at the 65th floor is 50 percent rented. The building will have 72 floors and is expected to completed by 2013.