

Citizens Insurance to shift 130 jobs to Jacksonville

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Apr. 17

tallahassee.com

Citizens Property Insurance Corp. will begin consolidating its information technology staff in Jacksonville later this year, including 130 jobs that are currently in Tallahassee.

Most of the personnel moves take place in 2015, Citizens spokesman Michael Peltier said Tuesday. The relocations include another 18 IT positions in Tampa.

“There are some folks that will be transitioning over later this year, but the bulk of it will be next year,” Peltier said.

Employees of the insurance company were notified Friday in a letter from president and CEO Barry Gilway that the plans were taking shape in light of leases ending next year on office space Citizens uses and the need to call for bids on new space.

Citizens has a total of nine office leases in Tallahassee, Tampa and Jacksonville, three of which expire at the end of next year.

Another factor is Citizens’ interest in implementing the recommendations of international consultant KPMG on how the company could improve efficiency and streamline operations, Peltier said. One suggestion was to move IT personnel closer to the place they do the bulk of their work for, which is Jacksonville.

For the employees who decide to move, Citizens will assist with those expenses. For those who decide not to relocate, Peltier said the human resources staff will designate an individual to assist the workers with finding employment elsewhere.

Citizens is based in Tallahassee, which will continue to have the administrative functions, including legal staff and those who have legislative and regulatory responsibilities, Peltier said. The Jacksonville and Tampa offices provide policy services and underwriting, claims and customer support.

Citizens is a not-for-profit, tax-exempt government corporation that provides insurance coverage to Florida property owners. It insures hundreds of thousands of homes, businesses and condominiums whose owners otherwise might not be able to find coverage.

In February, Citizens announced that its total number of policies had dropped below 1 million for the first time since 2006. Officials said that was a major milestone in efforts to shift more policies to the private market, thereby reducing Citizens’ own risk exposure, costs and enabling the company to assume its role as an insurer of last resort.