Congratulations to the Melvin Mark honor roll — 22 of the market’s top commercial real estate brokers whose talents brought us transactions totaling more than $80 million to our portfolio of commercial properties and helped us produce a stellar year in 2013.

Meet the head of our class, 2013.

On behalf of everyone at Melvin Mark, thank you for your continued hard work and effort on our behalf.

Here’s to another A+ year.

As Oregon prepares to Healthcare.gov, neighbors Utah and Idaho share their experiences on the federal exchange

Our Top Three Transactions

The Oregonian
40,412 sf of lease
Crow Plaza
Tom Usher and Mark Carnese
Cashman & Wakefield
Kaiser Foundation
71,673 sf of purchase
Sunset Center at Tanasbourne
Mark Fraser
Kidder Mathews
Jama Software
34,529 sf of lease
26 Taylor
Niall Travers
Cresa Portland

Our 2013 Honor Roll

Mark Carnese ............... Cashman & Wakefield
Brad Christiansen ......... Colliers International
Doug Deurwaarder .......... Cashman & Wakefield
Mark Fraser ................. Kidder Mathews
Mike Holzgang ............. Colliers International
Kevin Joshi ................. Kidder Mathews
Trevor Kafoury ............ CBRE
Gordon King ............... Colliers International
Jake Lancaster ............. Jones Lang LaSalle
Mark McFarland ........... Jones Lang LaSalle
Scott Madsen .............. Capacity Commercial Group
Miles Miller ............... Miles J. Miller Properties
Craig Reinhardt ............ Cresa Portland
Andrew Rosengarten ....... Jones Lang LaSalle
Joe Sandahl ............... Elliott Associates
Nathan Sawaki ............. Apex Real Estate Partners
Dan Swift ................. Cashman & Wakefield
Debbie Thomas ............ Debbie Thomas Real Estate
Niall Travers .............. Cresa Portland
Tom Usher ................. Cashman & Wakefield
Kevin Waldman ............ Cassidy Turley
Pat Yaeger ................. Cassidy Turley

A s Cover Oregon prepares to scrap its homegrown health insurance exchange and move over to the federal site, it might be instructive to look at the experience of two other Western states that used HealthCare.gov.

Utah and Idaho both employed the federal health exchange for the open enrollment period that ended March 31. Utah is sticking with the federal exchange, while Idaho has been creating a state-based exchange. Idaho’s, though, just wasn’t ready in time for the first open enrollment, hence its use of HealthCare.gov.

Like Oregon, both states experienced a lot of glitches and resulting frustration in October and November, when the marketplace opened. Unlike Oregon, the bugs on the federal site got ironed out in December and enrollments proceeded smoothly after that.

Utah signed up 75,000 people and Idaho 76,000. Oregon, despite being bogged down by a paper-based process, managed to enroll 70,000 people in private plans.

Utah: Like a 2003 Ford Taurus

“Last fall, when the site wasn’t working well, people were apprehensive,” said Jason Stevenson, education and communications director at the Utah Health Policy Project, a non-profit that received a navigator grant to inform Utahns about their insurance options under the Affordable Care Act.

“On Dec. 1, they flipped the switch on the repairs and it was like night and day. We went from a ’73 Ford Pinto to a 2003 Ford Taurus. It’s not a flashy car but it’s one that gets you where you need to go.”

Six regional carriers are offering as many as 91 individual plans, depending on the area. Stevenson said rates were among the lowest in the country, thanks to a healthy population and healthy competition among insurers.

“We had a very competitive HealthCare.gov marketplace,” Stevenson said.

Utahns still experienced some glitches even after Dec. 1, but of a sort that wouldn’t apply in Oregon because they were mostly related to the “Medicaid gap.” Unlike Oregon, Utah chose not to expand Medicaid, so a lot of people discovered they made too much for Medicaid and too little for federal premium subsidies.

“People got flagged for Medicaid, even though they didn’t qualify,” Stevenson said. “They would get caught in a Medicaid glitch ... they would be stuck in limbo for weeks and weeks. It didn’t happen to everyone, but it could really slow down the applications.”

Stevenson said officials at the Department of Health & Human Services regional office in Denver were very helpful. “People were on our side making it work in Utah,” he said.

Idaho: ‘Not doing it all at once’

Idaho also experienced glitches at first. “October and November were a nightmare. Nothing worked,” said Jody Olson, director of communications for Your Health Idaho.

“When they had the reboot in December, it was much smoother.”

Olson built the front end of its own site, which could link to the federal site, similar to what Oregon is doing. Now it’s completing the work, using Silicon Valley-based health insurance software company Get Insured as the vendor for the back-end piece and global technology consultants Accenture as its project manager.

“We’re not trying to do everything at once, but phasing it in,” Olson said. “We’re able to glean a lot of lessons from other states about what worked and what didn’t work.”

Hmm, maybe Oregon’s missteps will prove useful to Idaho?

“If it’s a shame because there was so much enthusiasm for this in Oregon,” Olson said. “What we don’t want to do is go too big, too fast. We want to make sure it functions correctly and will be secure.”

Does Stevenson wish that Utah had created its own exchange?

“Obviously, it would have been a little better if it had been homegrown, but you never know,” he said. “Look at what happened in Oregon. Of all the states that I would have thought would get it right, it would have been Oregon.”

Our 2013 Honor Roll