

Chamber's new digs intended to promote business success

By HILLARY GAVAN Senior staff writer | Posted: Tuesday, February 2, 2016 4:00 pm

BELOIT — The Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce was showing off its new home at Irontek, 601 Third St., on Monday.

The meet and greet event featured U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin and refreshments in celebration of the upscale new offices.

The Chamber is moving from its previous location at Vision Beloit, 500 Public Ave., to the Irontek site. Its first official day at Irontek was on Monday. The Chamber will keep its same phone number and it will be business as usual, according to Executive Director Tim Dutter.

Dutter said the Chamber's new home will be a one-stop shop for businesses in Beloit. It will help foster entrepreneurship and support business development. The Chamber will be the "anchor" tenant of the new site, with several start-up companies to follow.

Hendrick Management President and CEO Rob Gerbitz explained how Irontek's office space will be available for rent to companies as well as freelance workers. Irontek was the brainchild of Gerbitz as well as his colleague Isaac Bamgbose, an asset manager at Hendricks Commercial Properties.

"It's a combination co-working space, an incubator and an accelerator," Bamgbose said in an interview before the event.

Bamgbose explained there are three offices available for small start-up companies which can be rented on a monthly basis, as well as conference room space. In the middle of Irontek are about 40 individual spaces that freelance workers can rent.



Irontek

(From left): Isaac Bamgbose, an asset developer with Hendricks Commercial Properties chats with U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin and Greater Beloit Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Tim Dutter on Monday at Irontek. The Chamber is renting space at the new business incubator located at 601 Third Street.

Dutter said the 8,000-square-foot facility — featuring floor to ceiling windows, black and lime colors and an accent wall with graffiti — is the perfect home for the Chamber and many other business people.

The set up, for example, could help those in insurance, information technology, marketing, graphic design, legal occupations and more. The space is designed so business people will be able to network and bounce ideas off of each other.

With so many people working at home now, many working in technology fields, or even writers who previously flocked to coffee shops, may want to join the professional workspace.

Gerbitz said the idea was born when other companies complained they couldn't get enough engineers and computer programmers. The new space is hoped to attract such professionals.

Bamgbose added that area students, working with either startups located at Irontek or with companies such as Comply 365, AccuLynx or Fat Wallet, will have a dedicated space as well. Irontek, he said, will give students a great place to gain valuable work experience and network.

Baldwin said it was a special treat to visit Irontek on the Chamber's moving day.

“It makes me think about partnerships — the synergy created when people in education are talking with those in small and large businesses,” she said. “We need those partnerships for strong communities and a strong world.”

Baldwin said she is part of the career and technical education caucus, where she and her colleagues work to advance employment and innovation. As part of her work she often hears from employers concerned about the skills gap.

“We can fill in those gaps by the work you are doing here,” she said.