

# MAKING IT EASY TO CONTAIN BIG DREAMS

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Hillary Gavan/Beloit Daily News Irontek Community Manager Erin Clausen stands by the shipping containers available for rent from Irontek. The spaces are still under construction, but will be ready for tenants in December.

BELOIT - Startup companies and small businesses will have a trendy and unique place to set up shop.

In December, shipping containers will be available for rent at Irontek, 635 Third St.

"We're excited for the opportunity to add to our growing community of startups and entrepreneurs who are

passionate about growing their businesses in Wisconsin," said Irontek Community Manager Erin Clausen.

Construction on the 8,600-square-foot area north of Irontek began this summer. Corporate Contractors Inc. (CCI) prepared the space in anticipation of the shipping containers which began arriving on July 18.

The shipping containers were purchased from ConGlobal Industries in Forestview, Illinois, and fabricated by SG Blocks before arriving in Beloit.

Shipping container yards across the country are filled with containers deemed unusable and companies are beginning to sell them. Irontek purchased 24 containers in the following sizes: 8x10 feet, 8x20 and 8x40. The offices are dubbed "singles," "doubles" as well as one large office called "the courtyard" which provides space for up to five team members. The units come with sliding patio doors to allow for natural light to enter the space.

The smallest containers are rentable for \$350 a month; doubles, \$700; and the courtyard, \$1,250.

All of the memberships are month-to-month and include all the same amenities as Irontek such as 24-7 access to the space, Wifi, free coffee and snacks, access to conference space, business mentoring and resources to help the businesses grow.

Irontek plans to start marketing the spaces in mid-November, and tenants will move in during December.

CEO and President of Hendricks Commercial Properties Rob Gerbitz pitched the idea for renting out the shipping containers.

Container usage is growing as evidenced by the "tiny house" movement. The small spaces are also being used for apartment complexes and shopping malls. Clausen noted there is a bar called The Container Bar in Austin, Texas.

"It's definitely a trend right now, but it's also cost effective and is a way to recycle the containers which would otherwise be unused," she said.

In July, Clausen said a semi truck hauled the containers in and a special trailer was used to lower them into Irontek via the garage doors on the building's facade.

Because two cranes from the former Beloit Corporation remained in the existing space, one of the cranes was implemented as the focal point of the decor.

As of Thursday, 11 businesses which currently have desk memberships at Irontek had already signed up to rent space in the containers. Clausen noted.

Irontek has had a waiting list for private office space for more than two years. Using the vacant bay adjacent to Irontek, she said, would be ideal for expansion.

In a tour, Clausen showed how the different containers of various colors and sizes were placed inside the space. Each one will have its own HVAC and furniture provided. The main entrance will remain at Irontek's current location.

"This place will have community areas and breakout rooms, soft seating and creative and collaborative spaces," Clausen said.

Clausen said the design and placement of the containers gives the space a lot of energy and is attractive to business people seeking a creative environment.

Walker Lillard, of Voys Apps, has been tenant for a year-and-half and has plans to move to a container. His company Voys Apps is developing a product called Talktor, a product designed to find and schedule healthcare services. Lillard started with a desk membership but grew to rent a space upstairs. Currently, he has three employees and is expanding quickly.

"The new space will give room to grow the company. It also gives us more networking opportunities because we will be working alongside other startup companies," Lillard said.

For more information people can visit [www.irontekbeloit.com](http://www.irontekbeloit.com).