

RMI2 debuts consolidated home

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The new home for Rocky Mountain Innovation Initiative, or RMI2, is still two months from completion, but the \$7.2 million facility at 320 E. Vine Drive, Fort Collins, is taking shape.

Mayor Doug Hutchinson and Councilman Ben Manvel got their first glimpse of the 32,000-square-foot building under construction in north Fort Collins last week.

Mark Forsyth, chief executive officer of RMI2, led the private tour.

RMI2, a Fort Collins 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting innovation in Northern Colorado, has helped launch such startup companies as ZeroHero, Eckstein Diagnostics and Sprig Toys. They are expanding their presence in Fort Collins with the new facility.

RMI2 plans to consolidate under one roof its member companies, now scattered among three buildings.

The increased visibility and space that comes with the new office has already spurred interest from companies looking to move there.

Forsyth said they hope to be able to let companies start moving in early next year.

The incubator, currently located at 200 W. Mountain Ave., Fort Collins, is home to 24 companies. But just this year alone, RMI2 has received 44 applications from startups wanting to join. Applicants include out-of-state companies from as far away as Ohio.

Forsyth attributes a lot of that interest to the new building that will offer a conference room, reception area, training rooms and a 3,000-square-foot wet lab for bioscience companies, all at lower lease rates than what they are charged now.

"Everything was designed with the theme of innovation and creativity," Forsyth said. "It is really going to be a step up for a lot of our clients."

Much of the building's construction revolves around renewable green standards. RMI2 expects to qualify for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, gold standards and perhaps platinum.

One of the more visible areas of energy efficiency will be a 50-kilowatt Abound Solar array that will be installed on the roof of the building by one of its own tenants, Wirsol Solar Colorado Inc.

Wirsol is expanding its American operations by building its own headquarters adjacent to the new RMI2 building.

Wirsol expects to complete its new home west of RMI2 within a year or 18 months.

The new building and office park located within the North College Urban Renewal Area received a \$5.3 million loan from the city along with an estimated \$1.9 million new market tax credit.

A \$2.8 million grant from the Fort Collins Urban Renewal Authority board for tax increment financing will offset the city's loan.

Hutchinson said the facility is a good example of synergy in action between public and private entities generating business for the community.

Hutchinson said the city had made a good investment with its loan to RMI2.

"I'm delighted to see this, everything that is going on," Hutchinson told Forsyth as the tour drew to a close.
"It's great to see Fort Collins people building and working."