

Despite calls to ‘return to the office,’ remote workspaces see continued demand

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The COVID-19 pandemic brought with it a myriad of challenges to employers and employees alike. In fact, the entire workplace was, in some cases, quite literally turned upside down as the world tried to figure out how to continue conducting business and serving the market.

One solution came from what some of us have been doing for years now anyway, as still more professionals took their laptops home with them to their new office – their home office.

However, working from home didn’t work for everyone and in every situation. And it still doesn’t.

Another solution is in high demand now and continually growing. Referred to by many different names – coworking, shared, communal, virtual and/or hybrid office spaces – demand is on the path to far exceed current supply.

In Southwestern Illinois, these hotspots have popped up from Godfrey to East Alton, from Edwardsville to Fairview Heights and on down to Waterloo, and in other places as well.

“Prior to the pandemic, employers looked to hire from a specific area around where their office was based,” noted Wayne Berger, CEO of the Americas for IWG.

His company recently announced that they have three new Illinois locations coming, with one of their business-traveler-renowned Regus centers opening in Edwardsville in Spring 2023.

Offering a flexible workspace environment also allows employers to consider global-wide options for hiring and hosting employees, Berger further noted, given the Regus network of locations. “Positions are now flexible. They can be based virtually anywhere, beyond the city or region the employer is physically in,” he said. “This allows employers to attract equal, or better, talent than that of what’s locally available.”

Regus is one of IWG’s most globally recognized brands, with 1,100 locations in the U.S. and 3,500 locations in over 120 countries around the world. “Regus Edwardsville members will have access to any of these global Regus centers whenever needed as well,” Berger explained.

Members can join and access space daily, month-to-month, or long-term. Dedicated office spaces will be available. Members can access meeting room

space, either with their dedicated office space or as a standalone. Regus Edwardsville will offer a virtual office option as well, where a member can drop in and use a communal space as needed while also providing a professional office address so that they don’t have to use their personal contact information publicly.

And while IWG’s current customer base is 83 percent made up of Fortune 500 companies, the company’s customers also include a significant number of smaller and medium-sized companies as well as freelancers.

“We see a real dynamic balance between solopreneurs, freelancers, and enterprise interests situated in the Edwardsville market,” Berger said, “That is why we want to be here.”

“And in fact, research indicates that over 50 percent of the U.S. workforce is expected to be freelancing by 2030,” he added.

In addition to the Regus Edwardsville location, IWG will open a second Illinois center in Rockford as well as new headquarters in Champaign near the University of Illinois campus. IWG has further plans to add more than 500 locations throughout the United States.

IWG is opening most of its new locations in partnership with commercial real estate owners, developers and franchisee investors. These strategic partnerships are varied and flexible - anything from simple fit-outs to revenue and profit-sharing arrangements. The company will tailor locations with its partners to whatever format and style to meet the specific needs of buildings and customers.

For more information about IWG and its global Regus center brand, visit online at <https://www.iwgplc.com/en-gb>.

The Lodge is a long-time existing coworking space also located in Edwardsville. Moving toward its fifth year in business, The Lodge sits on historic Edwardsville’s Main Street, above Sacred Grounds Café and Vive Yoga Studio, at 231 North Main Street.

“When we opened, most of the surrounding coworking spaces were in St. Louis,” noted The Lodge’s Cody Savoie. “So, there was nothing for the person that lives in the Metro East. In fact, many of our members have offices in the city, but they come to us, so they don’t have to make that daily trek.

“Beyond the convenience, the space has the most professional feel without being too stuffy,” Savoie added. “It is



A view of from inside The Lodge, a remote/co-working space located in downtown Edwardsville.

the perfect blend of modern amenities and aesthetics with a vintage character from all the exposed original brick.”

“We have seven private offices, six private nooks, and about 35 general memberships we offer. All include 24-hour access to the space, allotted conference room hours, high-speed internet, complimentary printing, snacks and bottled water, and both hot and cold brew Goshen Coffee,” said Savoie.

“Of that, I have one nook and 6 general memberships available for prospects at this time,” he added. “All our contracts are month-to-month, so inventory does become available without notice. If you are interested in one of the spots or would like to get on our waiting list, please schedule a call or book a tour. You can also check us out on our website.”

The Lodge has an elevator on Main Street that makes it more easily accessible, and there is ample parking in surrounding lots.

For more information, visit online at <https://thelodgeworks.com/>.

Alternative Office Space is in East Alton, part of the revitalized Eastgate Shopping Center. Located at 219 East Gate Plaza, AOS has 16 private offices, with half of them currently available. They also have a communal space with many setup options to work from in an open-air environment. Tenant amenities include high-speed internet, telephone access, professional mailing addresses and delivery, and break room facilities.

AOS also offers complimentary snacks and drinks as well as a gaming area and lounge for breaks. Tenants have 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week access with their own individual access key card. Private offices also have their own individual access keys.

For more information about East Alton’s Alternative Office Space, call (618) 900-0525 or visit online at <https://alternativeofficespace.com>.

In Godfrey, the recently offered coworking space is known simply as “The Office.” And while you may not find much in the way of paper and office supplies there bearing the Dunder Mifflin brand, you will find all of the necessary amenities to productively and comfortably spend your time.

Co-located with Jim Claywell’s Raymond James financial services office at 5213 Mae Drive, The Office has space available for professionals and sole proprietors to work and meet with clients and prospects in a safe, secure environment.

“We have three separate private and secure offices that we are offering with a one-year commitment,” said Claywell. “A desk is provided, and tenants are welcome to bring in their own chairs and other décor, to set up as they like. We also have a common, open area with the ability to reserve on a regular schedule for a 6-month commitment. We can accommodate up to 10 people in that space, and we also can accommodate ‘come and go as you want’ needs.”

Claywell further noted that The Office has preferred access hours from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily, but other hours can also be accessible. The Office is separated from his own private practice, and there’s plenty of parking for tenants and visitors alike. Amenities include restroom and kitchen facilities, wi-fi, a copier, fax machine, and shredder, and the ability to decorate your chosen private office to suit. “It’s professionally better than meeting at Bread Co.,” Claywell added.

For more information about The Office, call Claywell at (618) 792-2671.

There are other known regional options in Fairview Heights and Waterloo, and perhaps still more to be discovered.

Café Biz 618 is a shared workspace located at 10850 Lincoln Trail #16, Fairview Heights. To learn more about them, visit online at <https://www.cafebiz618.com/> or call (618) 593-5164.

The Vaults Workplace is a co-working office space located just steps away from the Monroe County Courthouse at 102 W. Mill St., Waterloo. To learn more about them, visit online at <https://thevaultsworkplace.com> or call (888) 648-2858.

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HNTB, a transportation and design firm, has been hired for the design of this project in both Missouri and Illinois.

The project team includes five subcontractors, including KAI Enterprises, which will provide architectural integration of the fare collection system, fencing and other aspects of the project; ABNA Engineering, Inc., which will provide topographic surveying services as required; Kivindyo Engineering Services, LLC, which will provide utility coordination services; Custom Engineering, Inc., which will provide electrical engineering and design services; and Code Consultants, Inc., which will provide code compliance, fire protection, life safety and accessibility.

The project - including design, procurement and construction – is expected to be completed in 30 months. At the time of the forum, Grossenbacher said survey crews were out at the 38 stations gathering data that would be needed to move the design phase forward. “There’s a 30-month timeline in

total, with half of that time for design, then roughly a year for construction.”

Osborn addressed the Secure Platform Plan and its importance to regional economic development, business, and industry.

“Infrastructure is very important to business. You have to get people and products around. This is an economic imperative. We have to get people to where the jobs are,” Osborn said about the implementation of CMT’s Secure Platform Plan. “From a business perspective, it’s also an equity issue. So often we have people who want jobs but they don’t have the transportation to get to the jobs. For equitable economic development, people have to have access to public transportation.”

CMT hosts quarterly “Talking Transit” events to keep the region in the loop on issues and efforts influencing the local transit system. To learn more about these events and how CMT is working to further transit access in the St. Louis region, visit www.cmt-stl.org.