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Hooking up downtown (Flint)

Technology company hopes to boost revitalization efforts

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A minority-owned technology company is moving to downtown Flint in hopes of becoming part of downtown's revitalization.

Convergent Technology Partners expects to open for business Monday in its new office in the Phoenix Building, 801 S. Saginaw St., at Fourth Street.

"We're really tied to Flint and the success of Flint," said Martin Thomas, a partner in the company and a Flint resident.

Over the past few weeks, the technology design, consulting and support company gradually moved from a Miller Road office in Flint Township, where it was housed the past few years.

"We're growing and we need the space," said Edward Boychuk, Convergent's director of marketing.

The business seriously began scouting for downtown office locales this fall, after Thomas, former director of technology and management information systems for the Flint School District, bought a 51 percent interest in the company.

The 15-employee company settled on space in the Phoenix Building - about 2,500 square feet - and inked a five-year lease.

"It's a nice building," said John Foster, a Convergent partner and Waterford Township resident. "It was pretty much in move-in condition. The price was right."

By being downtown, the business hopes it can be a bigger part of technology initiatives in Genesee County and Flint. It also has a goal of helping redevelop the central business district.

"As Flint and Genesee County grows and becomes diverse we want to make sure that technology is a big part of that revitalization," Thomas said. Foster and Thomas are active in several local technology efforts.

Foster is treasurer for GLIMAEast, a professional technology group; Thomas sat on Flint's Telecommunications Advisory Commission, and both currently are on a committee trying to bring wireless Internet access to Genesee County.

Convergent holds a technology consulting and design contract with the state of Michigan, and designs infrastructure to support voice, data and video technologies. It also works with municipalities, universities and school districts across the state and wants to expand its private sector business.

The name Convergent Technology Partners dates back to October 2001, when Foster and Taylor & Morgan CPAs of Flint Township bought CommCorp Technology Services

from California-based CommCorp. The information technology business had been operating in Lennon.

Earlier this year, Thomas said, he bought out Taylor & Morgan's share of the company. Convergent is taking over Phoenix Building space previously occupied by Flint's ombudsman's office, said Jim Tubbs, one of the building's owners. "It's nice to see them move in there," said Tubbs.

Tubbs, who also owns the nearby Plaza One Financial Center, said he sees downtown moving in a positive direction.

"We're quite optimistic about what's going on down there," he said, citing the announcement by Rowe Inc., a Mundy Township-based engineering and surveying company, that it was relocating to downtown.

"I think that's just the beginning. I think you're going to see more activity."

Memo: Moving in

Convergent Technology Partners is relocating to downtown Flint.

* WHERE: Phoenix Building, 801 S. Saginaw St., Level 5.

* WHEN: Monday.

* WHAT: A technology consulting, design and support company, primarily serving government and municipalities, schools and universities.

* PARTNERS: Martin Thomas, John Foster.

* EMPLOYEES: 15.

* DETAILS: (810) 720-3820 or www.ctpartners.net.

Source: Convergent Technology Partners