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McKinstry creating an 'innovation center'

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In Georgetown, McKinstry is developing a 24,000-square-foot center for innovation. The goal is to bring together new and emerging companies to advance clean, green energy technology.

The McKinstry Innovation Center will be located in half of the top floor of a three-story, 120,000-square-foot building at 210 Hudson St. that was recently completed. The first two floors of the building are now used for parking, though part of the parking area will be turned into logistics space in the near future. The other half of the third floor houses McKinstry engineering.



Image courtesy of McKinstry and NBBJ [\[enlarge\]](#)

The McKinstry Innovation Center will occupy half of the top floor of a new three-story, 120,000-square-foot building at 210 Hudson St.

Construction of the Innovation Center's interior should begin in January and be complete next spring. NBBJ is the architect. McKinstry is doing its own construction work.

Dean Allen, McKinstry CEO, said the center is part of the firm's natural progression in supporting new ideas. He said McKinstry has acted as an incubator for new companies and ideas for decades.

"It sort of dawned on us that while we love the ideas we create... there are thousands if not millions of other ideas (in the energy industry) bubbling up," he said. "We might be better off having a space that was not just for us but was really for entrepreneurs."

Elsa Croonquist, managing director for the center, said space is being preleased, though nobody has yet signed. McKinstry is looking for companies that have a product, technology or service that improves energy efficiency in the built environment. Potential tenants could be working on something that creates efficiencies on construction sites, makes a better HVAC system, or concentrates on water use or recycled materials.

Croonquist said she has been speaking with a number of possible tenants who want to be near like-minded people doing similar work. "There isn't an innovation center or incubator for the built environment in the Northwest."

The current plan is to divide the space into 21 offices that can hold between one and four people. Croonquist said it's designed to be flexible, and spaces can change depending on tenants and their needs.

The center will have conference rooms, a kitchen, open areas and a work/copy room. It will have an innovation lounge/war room with views of the Seattle skyline that tenants can reserve. A concierge will aid companies with certain tasks.

The space will target LEED gold.

Croonquist said the interior design will reflect the work of those inside, with exposed joists, ducts and infrastructure. "You really will feel like you're in a building that is part of the building industry."

Tenants will also benefit from being near McKinstry. McKinstry employees may mentor start-up companies, and tenants can use McKinstry's amenities such as a deli, a wellness center including a full gym, and a driving range.

"This is a lot different than the notion of having some office space available and putting a green sign out front and saying 'how about green tenants'," Allen said. "This is really very much about participating and joining in McKinstry... it's really about being a part of what we're doing down here."

Croonquist is confident that even in this economy, people need business space. The recession, she said, is encouraging many people to start companies.

"Now's the time," she said. "I think that there's money on the sidelines just looking for good investments."

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