

# Innovation Pointe draws tenant

By TOM RAITHEL/Courier & Press staff writer

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Evansville's new business incubator has attracted its first business based outside of the Evansville area, said officials with the Growth Alliance for Greater Evansville (GAGE).

Quality Environmental Professionals Inc., (QEPI), an Indianapolis-based consulting firm, has already opened an office in Evansville and will be moving into the new Innovation Pointe incubator, 318 N. Main St., when the building opens this year.

The firm has moved into the city's current incubator in the Orr Iron Building, Fulton Avenue and the Lloyd Expressway, which is scheduled to be demolished to make room for a new Fulton-Lloyd interchange.

QEPI will move into the new incubator as that building is readied for occupation this year.

Joe Wallace, president and CEO of GAGE, the city's economic and Downtown development agency, said QEPI was one of the kinds of businesses that GAGE wanted to attract to Innovation Pointe.

"It's one of our targets — a technology and knowledge-based business whose headquarters are someplace else," Wallace said.

The incubator also seeks to attract starting businesses, he said.

QEPI provides environmental, engineering, health and safety and quality management consulting. Headquartered in Indianapolis, it has offices in South Bend, Ind., and Dayton, Ohio, and is opening offices in St. Louis, Mo. and Oak Ridge, Tenn.

QEPI is currently under contract by Evansville to develop a draft master plan for the Center City Industrial Park — a "brownfields" area bordered approximately by Fulton Avenue on the east, Columbia Street on the south and Pigeon Creek on the west and north.

Deborah Peters, managing principal of QEPI, said the company plans to stay in Evansville beyond the duration of the contract with the city. It will be using the office as a base to expand its services into Indiana and Kentucky, she said. The company plans to use the office to recruit employees and will be locating top level staff there.

The company will bring at least two employees to Evansville the first year and eventually will have an office of 12 to 15 people, Peters said.

Wallace said work continues on the Innovation Pointe building, formerly known as the Centrum building. The first wave of businesses will be moving onto floors 2 and 5 in July with the second wave moving in on floors 1, 3 and 4 in October.

This is the 12th business to sign a contract in the new business incubator. Most of the businesses are relocating from the city's current incubator.