



Development News

Highlight Center brings new synergy and office space to "white hot" Northeast

Camille LeFevre | Tuesday, August 25, 2015



“Northeast is white hot right now,” says Scott Tankenoff, managing partner, [Hillcrest Development](#), about the Minneapolis neighborhood. Hillcrest redeveloped the historic Frost and [Crown Center](#) buildings adjacent to Broadway and Central avenues, and will officially open the [Highlight Center](#) (a former GE Mazda light bulb factory, and more recently workshops and administrative offices for the Minneapolis School District) on Tuesday, September 15.

“The job and labor markets are unbelievably tight,” Tankenoff continues. “People are looking for commercial, office and retail space that’s high quality and durable. If you can add bicycle storage, showers for commuters, common areas lots of people can use at one time, a distinctive micro-brewery that tenants and visitors will use, rooftop garden areas and patios, lots of free parking and retain the building’s character within the existing fabric of the neighborhood, you’ve got a good mix.”

The Highlight Center does all that. [Sport Ngin](#), which makes software for managing sports league websites, is one of the building's main tenants, occupying about 30,000 square feet. Other tenants will include a law firm, Internet radio company, furniture rep and [MyMeds](#), a cloud-based web and mobile application that helps users manage their medications.

"Space is moving fast," Tankenoff says. "Many creative class-type companies would have looked in the North Loop but they like the price better here, and there are parking lots and other amenities nearby."

In an adjacent building, also redeveloped by Hillcrest, [Able Seedhouse and Brewery](#) is setting up operations. "Able will have unique large taproom, and produce and distribute their product, but will also source locally grown ingredients like hops," Tankenoff says, putting the new micro-brewery in good company alongside the likes of Bauhaus Brew Labs (in Crown Center) and Sociable Ciderwerks (down the street).

"The synergy creating by the tenants is critical to creating buzz and a community within the building and in the adjacent neighborhood," he adds. "People want to be part of a collective."

They may also want to work in what Tankenoff calls "the last great building in Northeast near downtown." The brick and timber frame structure, built in the 1920s, "was a disaster" when Hillcrest took over, he says, as it had been used for storage, and for plumbing, key, maintenance, carpentry and electrical shops. The former 807 Broadway is "right on top of good, future mass transit, and is a large building that allows for patios, rooftop gardens and gathering spaces."

The Highlight Center includes a common room for the community to use and will eventually incorporate solar panels for generating electricity. [RoehrSchmitt Architecture](#) and [Tanek Architecture and Design](#) collaborated with Hillcrest with the project.

"The process was all about retaining the character of the buildings, while adding a whimsical twist with materials inside," Tankenoff says. "Our goal is to express the classic nature of historic buildings while making them relevant, modern, appropriate and fun for today. Both those architecture firms clearly understand that."



