

P3 moves into Enterprise Center at OCU

- By Steven Collins Senior Reporter
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CIRCLEVILLE — You never know what might matter to a perspective business but having a modern meeting space and office can't hurt when trying to impress companies.

Pickaway Progress Partnership (P3) is Circleville and Pickaway County's economic development entity and it has moved its offices from East Franklin Street behind City Hall to the Robert W. Plaster Free Enterprise Center, opened in 2017, on Ohio Christian University's campus.

Ryan Scribner, P3 executive director, said as a community and an organization, they get one chance to make a first impression on perspective businesses

"It's probably the nicest office space in Pickaway County," he said. "I don't need that for myself but for the mission we're doing to attract outside interest and people to buy into our community. I think the space engenders confidence and presents an image of progress and success.

"I think it shows we take ourselves seriously, we take development seriously and we have a lot to offer and hang our hat on," he said.

Scribner said in addition to the quality of the space, the move makes sense with alignment and the purpose of the building when it was envisioned and constructed.

"P3 is focused on supporting existing employers, growing manufacturing and logistics and those things, and this building is about supporting business development and small businesses. It works hand in glove and all fits together. I think the more energy we get out here, the better it will be for everybody."

Part of moving to the new building comes with increased bandwidth and technology, such as a TV that Scribner can hook up a computer to and use to display maps instead of having to print them on pieces of paper.

"It's no secret that in portions of our area broadband availability can be a challenge, but we have this space with an unbelievable fiber optic connection with unbelievable bandwidth both up and down," he said. "I've come to appreciate that out of the gate with what we do."

Scribner said he's already had meetings at the new office and impressed clients.

"Does it mean that we win a deal that we otherwise wouldn't have? Probably not, but you never know," he said. "You want to stack the odds in your favor and this is one of the ways to do that."

Craig Brown, chief relationship officer for OCU, said the purpose of the center was to increase regional economic prosperity, by thinking about entrepreneurship and workforce development.

"Having P3 as a part of it adds weight," he said. "It increases not only the value to this entity but increases the value to Pickaway County. When a site selection team goes to Pickaway County and they walk in this building, it speaks to a comprehensive, harmonious working collaboration with the county, state, city, a private university and entrepreneurship. It's not isolated in a silo. It says we're very forward thinking."

Brown said the building is much more than "Class A office space" with the state and American flags out in front of the building along a state route.

"They were both right there," he said. "I had two meetings with the commissioners and I couldn't walk across the street. It's only a five minute drive if I don't hit any lights so there are tradeoffs."

P3 helped aid in the construction of the building by helping to apply for an Economic Development Administration grant provided by the federal government

"We wrote and re-wrote the grant multiple times and made multiple trips to Washington D.C.," he said. "With help from our congressional officials the grant was secured by OCU and there was a sustained effort after that to engage state, local and private investors to help round out the effort."

Scribner said they took their time getting set up over the last couple of months and are operational with one casualty, the copy machine.

"It worked beautifully at the old place but as soon as we got it here it stopped working," he said. "Moving it just killed it."