



Background

The Renaissance District project rehabilitated two of the four remaining buildings of the former South Bend Studebaker plant, a massive industrial complex that at one time consisted of over 1,400 acres and eight million square feet of manufacturing space. The Studebaker Corporation's roots originate in the mid-1850s when the company's namesake founders began producing wagons. Business boomed following the Civil War. At the turn of the century, the company began exploring automobile production, and by the early 1920s, it became the fourth largest automobile manufacturer in the world. Unfortunately, the company struggled during the Great Depression, and while World War II created increased demand for its products, the company finally closed in 1966.

The buildings comprising Renaissance District were built between 1923 and 1946 for auto body assembly, tool/machine shop, and truck cab production. At the facility's peak, the campus employed over 21,200 individuals in the South Bend community but following the company's decline had been vacant for over 50 years.

The Project

The newly rehabilitated 250,000 square foot Renaissance District complex now provides a multitude of uses encompassing advanced manufacturing, education, incubation, office, and a data center. Following a 50-year absence, the rehabilitation has once again allowed manufacturing and technology to blossom on the site through sheet metal production and cup printing. Incubation space provides an environment to help local entrepreneurs create and grow new businesses. Educational and workforce development space allows local schools and organizations to train local students and create synergies with the range of tenants on site. The building itself embodies new technology through the employment of sustainable technologies that allow it to capture excess energy generated in its data center and direct it towards heating and cooling systems. In a twist of irony, while the buildings' original uses relied on the site's proximity to adjacent railway lines, its new uses take advantage of its proximity to a transcontinental fiber optic cable that runs under the adjacent railway line.



Total Development Cost:
\$22.9 Million



NTCIC Financing:
\$8 Million NMTC Allocation



Project Partner:
Studebaker Building 84 LLC



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Economic and Community Impact

A part of the Renaissance District's mission is to support and encourage light manufacturing and technology-oriented careers. For example, one tenant, the South Bend Code School, is a computer coding school for children ages 7-18. It strives to help students from all cultural and economic backgrounds obtain technical coding skills as well as learn about entrepreneurship, college preparation, and personal development. This school served 121 people in 2017 of which nearly 50% were low-income persons.

Renaissance District is located in a Brownfields redevelopment area. Its development resulted in a massive 750,000 square feet remediation of lead paint and asbestos, meaning that potential contaminants have been removed from the thousands of people living in the area. According to the City of South Bend, it is the largest lead-based paint clean-up project ever undertaken in the State of Indiana.

The site's redevelopment is integral to the Regional Cities Initiative that seeks to attract and retain talent for the South Bend regional economy. It is also central to the City of South Bend's plans to revitalize the City. Since the project broke ground, new residential infill has begun in the surrounding community, revitalizing vacant lots and pushing density towards downtown.

EnFocus operates the incubation space where local entrepreneurs, freelancers, consultants, small businesses, students, and community members can network and use shared offices, conference rooms, and classrooms. EnFocus provides a one-year Fellowship program that empowers recent graduates to work and think like entrepreneurs to solve the community's toughest challenges. There were 14 Fellows in the 2017 enFocus program.