eFactory to expand co-working space into Brick City

Executive Director Rachel Anderson talks desks, the workforce pipeline and gives a rundown of what exactly comprises IDEA Commons.

Announcer ([00:03](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/t_0qQ0uNfZFqtMoNn1uoTGZuDHh1jzhE3LdNtZ3PMYMtfxFVdk4HDxVpiu4ZyFU_1XmQKyBaaHG8YTHAR22WFDAIgb8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

The Missouri State Journal, a weekly program keeping you in touch with Missouri State University.

Emily Letterman ([00:09](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/t_0qQ0uNfZFqtMoNn1uoTGZuDHh1jzhE3LdNtZ3PMYMtfxFVdk4HDxVpiu4ZyFU_1XmQKyBaaHG8YTHAR22WFDAIgb8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Last month, the eFactory at Missouri State University celebrated its10th anniversary with a party and an announcement: It’s growing.

Starting this month, the eFactory is expanding its co-working space into Brick City. The move gives more rising professionals and freelancers space to work and grow. It’s a step that signifies the Queen City’s business hub is working – and it is succeeding.

I’m Emily Letterman.

Today, I’m joined by Rachel Anderson, executive director of the eFactory at Missouri State University.

The eFactory is located on North Jefferson Avenue in what is known as the IDEA Commons.

While this urban innovation district has been around for about 15 years, the concept, the goals and even the physical space area a bit of a word soup, so it is worth taking a moment to run it down.

Rachel Anderson ([00:59](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/t_0qQ0uNfZFqtMoNn1uoTGZuDHh1jzhE3LdNtZ3PMYMtfxFVdk4HDxVpiu4ZyFU_1XmQKyBaaHG8YTHAR22WFDAIgb8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Idea Commons is downtown. It's really 88 acres just north of the square, all the way up to Chestnut Expressway, serving as the government corridor. Buildings that had been, you know, once robust, places of commerce that had unfortunately, in the downturn, a lot of them had shuttered. Areas of blight.

(Former Missouri State) President (Michael) Nitzel at the time really had this vision of how could we reinvent this area of downtown, make it a place where students can not just go to class, but also work alongside companies and have this entrepreneurial spirit. So, we have really three kind of primary areas that the university ha is a lead anchor on.

So we have Brick City, which is Missouri State's Art and Design Program. Then the eFactory. We are home, of course, to our business incubator, business support services. And then across the street, the other side of the silos, is the Jordan Valley Innovation Center that just also went through expansion, which is really exciting. It has some high-tech R&D prototyping, working with the Department of Defense grants and, and contracts and, and lots of really innovative, exciting things.

Emily Letterman ([02:10](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/t_0qQ0uNfZFqtMoNn1uoTGZuDHh1jzhE3LdNtZ3PMYMtfxFVdk4HDxVpiu4ZyFU_1XmQKyBaaHG8YTHAR22WFDAIgb8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Idea Commons was born out of a shared goal and a need for university expansion. Now the eFactory is at 100% capacity and in expansion mode once again.

Rachel Anderson ([02:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/t_0qQ0uNfZFqtMoNn1uoTGZuDHh1jzhE3LdNtZ3PMYMtfxFVdk4HDxVpiu4ZyFU_1XmQKyBaaHG8YTHAR22WFDAIgb8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

So, we have 45 private offices where people come and work every single day. And co-working space where we serve about 40 members on a monthly basis. And so, we have been fully occupied since 2017, even after renovations, believe it or not. Usually in our world, occupancy hovers around 75 to 80%, um, typically even lower when it's affiliated with a university.

Emily Letterman ([02:47](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/t_0qQ0uNfZFqtMoNn1uoTGZuDHh1jzhE3LdNtZ3PMYMtfxFVdk4HDxVpiu4ZyFU_1XmQKyBaaHG8YTHAR22WFDAIgb8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

Crossing the street and occupying the third floor of building three in Brick City, Anderson said the previous tenant left an ideal setup.

Rachel Anderson ([02:55](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/t_0qQ0uNfZFqtMoNn1uoTGZuDHh1jzhE3LdNtZ3PMYMtfxFVdk4HDxVpiu4ZyFU_1XmQKyBaaHG8YTHAR22WFDAIgb8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

It was formerly home to the Marlin Advertising Agency. And when Marlin was acquired a few years back, it became a space that was open and, and we had a few ideas of what it could be for the university. And we put our name into the hat and thought it would be a great place to expand co-working too. It was already designed and outfitted in a space that really conducive to co-working space.

Emily Letterman ([03:22](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/t_0qQ0uNfZFqtMoNn1uoTGZuDHh1jzhE3LdNtZ3PMYMtfxFVdk4HDxVpiu4ZyFU_1XmQKyBaaHG8YTHAR22WFDAIgb8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

With three renovations and an expansion under its belt. Anderson says the eFactory is now excited to focus on something different for a bit, making connections.

Rachel Anderson ([03:32](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/t_0qQ0uNfZFqtMoNn1uoTGZuDHh1jzhE3LdNtZ3PMYMtfxFVdk4HDxVpiu4ZyFU_1XmQKyBaaHG8YTHAR22WFDAIgb8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

As part of Missouri State’s strategic plan, we can help really formalize and make more connections between the university and employers. Whether that’s course projects where students get to work, you know, alongside employers on real world experiences through a specific semester. Or maybe it’s a professor that has expertise and a specific area that can work alongside an employer. As well as how can we solve some of these workforce issues that we're seeing employers face.

And so how can we get students connected earlier in their career here while they're at Missouri State with employers? And then how do we have that be a longer pipeline? So, I think it's about this, you know, place where opportunities can come to life and, and things can have a dream that you can turn into a reality.

Emily Letterman ([04:25](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/t_0qQ0uNfZFqtMoNn1uoTGZuDHh1jzhE3LdNtZ3PMYMtfxFVdk4HDxVpiu4ZyFU_1XmQKyBaaHG8YTHAR22WFDAIgb8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

To learn more about coworking space in the eFactory, visit [eFactory.MissouriState.edu](http://efactory.missouristate.edu/). My guest today has been Rachel Anderson, executive director of the eFactory.

I’m Emily Letterman for the Missouri State Journal.

Announcer ([04:39](https://www.temi.com/editor/t/t_0qQ0uNfZFqtMoNn1uoTGZuDHh1jzhE3LdNtZ3PMYMtfxFVdk4HDxVpiu4ZyFU_1XmQKyBaaHG8YTHAR22WFDAIgb8?loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink)):

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