

Year in Review 2012: Southwestern Illinois

Alton Center Business Park welcomes American Water Resources expansion in 2012

By KERRY L. SMITH

Alton Center Business Park - the crown jewel of job creation for the city of Alton and Clark Properties' Illinois-side success story - will look back on 2012 as another year of enthusiastic job growth at the 150-acre, mixed-use development.

President Mike Clark says the expansion of American Water Resources (a subsidiary of American Water Co.) from temporary workspace in a modular office back in 2003 to its third and most recent expansion of 12,455 square feet brings the company's total build-out to 20,427 square feet of finished office space. The employees moved into the new space in mid-December. AWR currently provides 24/7 live customer support in 35 states will soon expand to 37 states by late January, according to Adam Boelke, vice president of operations.

AWR provides water line protection, sewer line protection and in-home plumbing emergency programs; it currently has nearly one million contracts.

The project took place in two phases while AWR continued its 24/7-call center operation via modular dividing wall separations to mitigate noise and maintain a debris-free environment. The move from the smaller space to the new addition literally occurred overnight, Boelke says. According to Clark, the construction team led by Contegra Construction and its subcontractors did an excellent job delivering a quality project on schedule; the design team led by Contegra and Space LLC, he adds, spent countless hours with Boelke and Vickie Green of AWR and with Henry Hellrung of AWW, making sure that the space met all of the company's current and future operational function and efficiency requirements and created a tremendous working environment.

Expanded restroom facilities, a large kitchen and cafeteria and additional conference rooms are all part of AWR's new look as part of the expansion. Clark says the project created a separate entrance for AWR on the west side of Alton Center Business Park, along with a dedicated parking lot for AWR employees and guests.

The tremendous growth that both Illinois American Water and American Water Resources has experienced - and also Imperial Manufacturing, Alton Center's other major tenant at the park - is a bright contrast to overall sluggish economic conditions, Clark says, and a credit to the work ethic and the strategic success of these companies. Over the past several years, these companies collectively have created nearly 600 full-time jobs in the Alton community and surrounding River Bend area. Given the difficult economic times and downsizing that many firms have faced over the past few years, this kind of job creation is truly a blessing, Clark adds.

Alton Center Business Park is fortunate to have the opportunity, and the spaces, to accommodate as these excellent companies expand, says Clark. There remains nearly 151,300 contiguous square feet of space available for lease, sale or design-build options, and 75 acres of build-to-suit sites ready for new development. Alton Center Business Park is located with the city of Alton's Enterprise Zone, TIF district and Hub Zone.



American Water Resources Opens Expanded Operations Center in Alton, Ill. on December 12, 2012