



PLACE

INNOVATION HALL TRANSITION



Business group and STL Startup Week meetings at Innovation Hall. Photo by Cortex staff

Cortex will be assuming operational control of Innovation Hall in the Fall 2020. The 17,000 square-foot event venue in 4220 Duncan Avenue was designed to be a source of revenue for Venture Café, who has been managing the space since it opened in November 2019. With nearly all events being cancelled starting in March due to COVID-19 restrictions, the space no longer supports that revenue stream and is a major expense for Venture Café. Cortex and Venture Café are working through the details of ending the sublease and completing the transition. We expect there to be few events held in Innovation Hall through the end of 2020. We will closely monitor the City's COVID-19 guidelines and reassess re-opening plans on an ongoing basis.

4210 DUNCAN IN THE NEWS!

In an article published in the St. Louis Post Dispatch last week, Tom Osha, Senior VP, Innovation and Economic Development, at Wexford Science and Technology, talked about Wexford's continued commitment to the project at 4210 Duncan Avenue. In the article, Osha stressed that despite the Covid-19 induced economic downturn, Wexford's enthusiasm for the project "has not wavered." Osha went on to say, "we aren't ready to make any announcements yet, but we're having some good conversations around potential anchor tenants for the building." The Cortex team continues to work in close collaboration with our partners at Wexford to recruit new tenants. We continue to be hopeful that the project will resume construction sometime later this year.



4210 Duncan construction in early 2020. Photo by Cortex staff.

PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMMING

GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN ST. LOUIS



General Assembly's classroom environment. Photo by General Assembly staff.

Classes are available in three different formats:

- Full-time
- Part-time in the evening
- Individual workshops



General Assembly (GA), the global leaders in skills education, is opening a remote campus in St. Louis!

Since 2011, GA has helped over 80,000 adults transition into jobs in tech. Our community of professionals and innovators are looking to reskill into a new job or learn a new skill to get that promotion can access their 12-week programs in coding, data science, UX design, data analytics, digital marketing, python, product management and React.

GA has also transformed teams at hundreds of global companies, including more than 40 of the Fortune 100, helping companies avoid layoffs by retraining legacy workers into new roles. empowering teams with critical skills to boost impact and help build a talent pipeline to fill roles effectively and efficiently.

Through CIC, Venture Café, and Cortex, General Assembly will launch operations on September 1st producing free events and workshops, every month, to engage, teach, connect, inspire, and transform strong talent into relevant powerhouses that drive digital businesses.

SQUARE ONE BOOT CAMP UPDATE

CET received 23 applications and invited 20 entrepreneurs to participate in the fall 2020 SQ1 Boot Camp program.

The class demographic breakdown includes:

African Americans - eight (40%)
 Caucasians - eight (40%)
 Hispanic/Latinx - two (10%)
 Other - two (10%)

They self-identified as:

People of color - twelve (60%)
 Cisgender females - eight (40%)
 Cisgender males - ten (50%)
 Non-Cisgender female - one (5%)
 Other - one (5%)

Average age: 36.6

Field of interest or work:

Bio - six
 Consumer Manufactured Products - six
 IT - eight



Square One Boot Camp session 2019.
 Photo by JenR Photography.

The fall 2020 Boot camp runs from September 14, 2020 to November 17, 2020.

PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMMING

FILAMENT AND CORTEX PARTNER TO PRESENT THINKSGIVING

Thinksgiving will connect St. Louis nonprofits with innovation and strategy teams from our region's smartest companies, consultancies, and agencies for a day of collaborative problem-solving focused on our future. Each team selects one nonprofit challenge (without knowing which nonprofit initially) and spends time over several months defining a solution and working with the nonprofit leadership team to put the solution into practice.

Who can participate? Companies, consultancies, creative agencies, professional service firms, innovation-focused businesses, and large, institutional nonprofits can participate as Innovation Partners by committing an innovation/strategy team for a full day (or equivalent) to work with the nonprofit's on their Thinksgiving challenge.

How many teams will there be? The more, the merrier! Because Thinksgiving pairs Innovation Partners with deserving nonprofits, every team that signs up allows a nonprofit to participate. We expect at least 20 participants but have room for 50 or more.

How much does it cost? While nonprofits participate for free, the cost to field an Innovation Team is \$5,000 and is payable to Cortex, a 501(c)(3). The entry fee covers each nonprofit's participation in Thinksgiving, including the Challenge Workshops and the Implementation Retreats.

How do we apply? Visit the **THINKSGIVING.ORG** website for more information. Applications formally open on August 17, 2020, and you can email any questions or ideas to **Matt@TheFilament.com** or sign up on the website to attend an info session.

Cortex is excited to be a partner with Filament and Delmar Divine in Thinksgiving. This is a great opportunity for companies to engage their staff and support the community in a very tangible way.

STL STARTUP WEEK UPDATE

STL Startup Week will be back for its second year from November 9-13, 2020. The need to highlight the area's startup resources is greater than ever, as higher unemployment rates translate to more people starting businesses as a source of income.

This year's activities will focus on:

- Entrepreneur education
- Introduction to startup resources
- Connection to fellow business owners
- Communication on the current state of the St. Louis startup ecosystem
- Celebration of small business successes
- Student entrepreneurship at the high school and college level

Watch for more details at **www.stlouisstartupweek.com**



PEOPLE PROFILES

COMMUNITY MEMBER



Suzanne Sierra, center, with representatives from the Hispanic Chamber and Square during a press conference for Calle Cherokee/Latino Small Business Saturday. 📷 by Suzanne Sierra.

SUZANNE SIERRA, SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER

Q: Please tell us about your role at St. Louis Mosaic?

A: As Senior Program Manager for the St. Louis Mosaic Project, I am in charge of managing programs that help the St. Louis region become more welcoming to foreign-born individuals who relocate here. We are a regional initiative of the World Trade Center-St. Louis and part of the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership. Economic development is a priority -- that means helping foreign-born, minority-owned small businesses and entrepreneurs tap into the ecosystem of resources that can help them grow and succeed.



St. Louis Mosaic Project

Q: What is St. Louis Mosaic's main goal or mission?

A: To transform St. Louis into the fastest-growing major metropolitan area for immigration by the year 2025 and to add 25,000 foreign-born to the region by 2025, against the base in 2016.

Q: How do you measure St. Louis Mosaic's success in changing the perception people in St. Louis have about the local Immigrant community?

A: We now have nearly 40 companies, 870 individuals, and 70 area k-12 schools that have become Mosaic Project Ambassadors – they proactively volunteer to take actions or implement initiatives to hire more diverse talent; support foreign-born students and their families; shop or buy from immigrant-owned businesses or help newcomers find jobs in their fields. These are great examples of how our region embraces the foreign-born community!

Q: How can Cortex help St. Louis Mosaic project thrive?

A: Engage with us in events or opportunities to highlight our growing foreign-born community, which includes entrepreneurs.

CORTEX TEAM MEMBER

KEITH ROBINSON, ACCOUNTANT



Q: Please tell us about your responsibilities as the Cortex Accountant?

A: As the Cortex Accountant, my role is to perform the general accounting and administrative functions required to support the work of Cortex, its subsidiaries, and affiliates. I report directly to our CFO.

Q: How has the COVID-19 pandemic challenged your job in keeping Cortex fiscally/financially sound?

A: Like many entities, Cortex has been impacted by the pandemic. Luckily, we were financially sound prior to the outbreak and have been able to weather the storm. But because of the unique relationship we have with our neighbors and partners in the District, what effects them, influences us also. So, the challenge has been to ensure that Cortex keeps to its budget and to reduce any unnecessary expenditures.

Keith at a golf tournament in Dallas, Texas. "I am smiling because I just realized I have one more ball left after, losing ten!" 📷 by Keith Robinson

Q: Can you share what excites you about your job as the Cortex accountant?

A: The excitement is making sure Cortex is financially sound to continue our mission of improving lives and livelihoods in our region.

Q: Tell us something most people do not know about you? Why?

A: I am an avid golfer (not a great golfer, 😊). I decided to take up the game due to forced retirement from recreational basketball. The young guys were getting past me and I could not do anything about it!