

Modern building technology used



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When Creighton University expansion forced O'Keefe Elevator Co. to move from its old headquarters, it chose to relocate into a renovated downtown warehouse rather than move to west Omaha or the area near Eppley Airfield, says Denis "Skip" O'Keefe, president and chief executive officer.

2 downtown projects completed

BY GRACE SHIM

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In about two weeks, files and records will be moved into Iron Mountain Inc.'s new \$2 million, 35,000-square-foot structure near 16th and Leavenworth Streets.

Just a few blocks away, O'Keefe Elevator Co. Inc. of Omaha has completed a \$2.7 million project to renovate a former warehouse into its new 77,000-square-foot headquarters at 1402 Jones St.

Iron Mountain and O'Keefe Elevator are the latest examples of companies completing million-dollar projects downtown.

Workers in October broke ground on Iron Mountain's four-story concrete building, which will hold data such as medical records, business records and other paper and magnetic tape records. It is connected by a recently constructed eight-truck loading dock to Iron Mountain's 1601 Leavenworth St. office and data storage building.

Boston-based Iron Mountain has four facilities in Omaha, including the newest one.

At the O'Keefe building, construction began in June 2001 and finished last month, said Denis "Skip" O'Keefe, president and chief executive officer for the privately owned

company.

O'Keefe Elevator was established in 1883 by Skip O'Keefe's grandfather. It is one of the largest elevator companies in the country.

O'Keefe said the company moved from its old headquarters at 701 N. 20th St. because Creighton University bought the building for its campus expansion.

Given the choice of moving to west Omaha or the area near Eppley Airfield and occupying a new metal building, O'Keefe said the company opted for a downtown warehouse.

The building, built in 1920 by the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co., was sold to O'Keefe Elevator in about 1979.

Like many of the other historic Old Market buildings, the O'Keefe structure has brick walls, wooden floors and high ceilings. With the remodeling, the building also has an atrium, glass office doors, large steel beams and high-tech wiring.

O'Keefe points out the headquarters' modern amenities, which include an underground parking lot with 31 stalls, an art gallery with photos of the building's construction on the first floor, and a workout room on the third floor.

From a rooftop patio with a view of the downtown skyline,



BUDY SMITH/THE WORLD-HERALD

"This has been two years' worth of planning."

Dave Harding, Iron Mountain Inc.

O'Keefe pointed to various buildings that have or soon will have O'Keefe elevators, such as the Union Pacific Center, now under construction, and the recently completed First National Tower.

He said the elevators in the 43-story First National tower are among the fastest in the country.

Iron Mountain's structure also employs modern building technology, with the latest in temperature and humidity controls and security measures.

Dave Harding, general manager for Iron Mountain's Omaha office, said the facility has fire-suppression controls so precise that they can detect and flush out fire in an affected area without dousing the entire building and possibly damag-

ing other records. The controls are set so that 14 doors in the ceiling also open, ventilating the room and mitigating smoke damage.

"This has been two years' worth of planning," said Harding.

"In the last year or so, we've been seeing a lot of growth," he said, noting that the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and news stories involving companies' documents have led to heightened interest in secure storage for paper files. "Customers are wanting to find somebody to take better care of their records."

Asked whether the new building would lead to new jobs, Harding said: "As business grows, we'll definitely

See Downtown: Page 2

Downtown: Projects completed

Continued from Page 1

hire more employees." The company now has 40 employees.

The company also is considering a \$250,000 remodeling project to update the lobby and office, Harding said.

Iron Mountain has had an office in Omaha for four years. Three of its four buildings are between 16th and 18th Streets, along Leavenworth. The other is in west Omaha at 109th and E Streets.

Iron Mountain, established 51 years ago, is the largest records management company worldwide. It stores 40 percent of all records in the United States.

