



Covington gaining another global HQ

Branding, marketing firm DeanHouston+ moving 40 employees to former Two Rivers school

COVINGTON, Ky. – Create Class A office space. Tap The Cov’s “eccentric vibe” to recruit *Creative Design* firms.

Two of the recommendations in a citywide plan written two years ago to bring singular focus to Covington’s economic development efforts have intersected in a large-scale announcement: DeanHouston+ -- one of Greater Cincinnati’s oldest and largest integrated branding and marketing firms – is moving its global headquarters to the former Two Rivers Middle School building on Scott Street.

The \$1.8 million project will bring 40 employees to Covington, and the company says it plans to add at least 16 more jobs over the next three years.

Company officials said employees had fallen in love with Covington’s downtown and “walkability” during a series of site visits.

“DeanHouston+ is a brand on the move – literally and figuratively. Like us, Covington is exploding with positive energy and growth, which perfectly aligns with our creative people, culture, and growth objectives,” said Dale Dean, founder and CEO of DeanHouston+. “Our entire team is excited about this move.”

Covington officials said the move gave further reinforcement of two ongoing strategies in its 2019 “Garner Report”: Pursuing companies that fall in the “All Things Office” sector and repurposing historic buildings into modern workspaces.

“Companies continue to look at Covington as great place to locate because of the authentic, welcoming, and exciting amenities we offer, which they know will help them attract the talent they need to compete,” Mayor Joe Meyer said. “The decision by DeanHouston+ to locate its global headquarters here is a signal to other companies that Covington is the Tri-state’s preferred business address for creative firms.”

Among those “creative design firms” in Covington are an array of marketing, communications, media, design, branding, architectural, and artistic agencies.

The Covington Board of Commissioners approved a payroll tax incentive Tuesday night to partner on the deal. Even after the incentive, Covington expects to take in an estimated \$840,000 in payroll taxes over the next 10 years because of the move, Economic Development Director Tom West said.

About DeanHouston+

The company has satellite offices in Chicago, Nashville, Los Angeles, and China, with a strategic partnership in Germany. It’s been in business 33 years.

Company officials said they hope to move to Covington on Jan. 1, 2022, after the building’s renovation is completed.

About 525 Scott

The 1.5-acre property at 525 Scott St. is across from the Kenton County Public Library. It was sold in February 2021 by Kentucky Community and Technical College System to Covington Kentucky Development LLC, an investment group led by Guy van Rooyen, whose investment group also owns the iconic Hotel Covington.

It’s undergoing a full interior renovation with significant exterior improvements, as designed by Work Architecture + Design and carried out by Manning Contracting.

“We are thrilled, once again, to be restoring a neglected building back to its former glory in the downtown core,” Guy van Rooyen said. “Our commitment and passion for these restoration projects continues as we bring online another asset to enhance the thriving Covington community.”

The building has 71,000 square feet spread over three floors.

The first phase of the renovation, which is finished, completed 5,300 square feet of space on the ground floor that is now occupied by Covington Classical Academy.

The second phase will prepare the rest of the building for future business tenants, including about 12,000 square feet of space on the second floor for DeanHouston+, plus improve the amenity space.

The work will include new access points, courtyard improvements at the corner of Scott and Sixth streets, new outdoor terraces for tenants, and rooftop space.

“At a time when many businesses are struggling to find modern office space and recruit talented team members, this project provides a new high-end office asset for the city,” said Tyler Watkins of Work Architecture. “Our goal working with Covington Kentucky Development LLC is ... helping attract a new generation of professionals to the cultural and economic core of Covington.”