

Apiary from front

space. The business, owned by Jon Hicks and his wife Jocelyn Schlichting-Hicks, of Rice, will host its grand opening celebration from 4-9 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 9, at 703 W. St. Germain St., St. Cloud.

Coworking spaces are trending as more employers become flexible with their needs.

“Businesses are shrinking their needs for space because people aren’t in every single day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.,” Hicks said. “They employ the same number of people, but now they need less space.”

Schlichting-Hicks agreed.

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- Jon Hicks

“And, the work markets are changing so much,” she said. “There are so many people with (varying) schedules, working farther away from home three days a week and working for

companies out of state. And, with all the technology available, you hear of this more and more.”

The couple’s endeavor of renovating the Thelen building and creating their new business derived from need.

For over three years, the couple lived and worked apart for four days each week – Schlichting-Hicks in Rice and Hicks in Minneapolis. When Hicks transitioned to an employer which would allow him to move to Rice and require him to work remotely, he began looking for office space in a coworking environment in order to be in a social atmosphere. He quickly learned options were limited.

“I toured two of the



PHOTOS BY NATASHA BARBER

Elevator equipment, built in the 1890s, will become a focal point of a coffee nook at Apiary Coworking in St. Cloud. The coworking space will host a grand opening celebration Jan. 9, 2020.

three (coworking spaces in St. Cloud) and looked at the other one online, and they were full,” Hicks said.

Hicks then turned to a real estate broker. But, when he learned most marketed suites were 2,000 square feet or more, the couple began toying with the idea of what they deem as a collection of working beehives.

“The space need idea came from not being able to get the space,

from his experience in Minneapolis working around coworking spaces and seeing how functional they are when people get used to the new idea, and the broker validating that there just isn’t space this size very available,” Schlichting-Hicks said. “This fills that small space need.”

The couple purchased the building in May 2019 and have been renovating the interior to reflect a modern yet historical aesthetic.

“All the furniture will be brightly colored, modern, a lot of glass, but not over the top that we can’t work in the original brick and the floor upstairs,” Hicks said.

The suspended ceilings were removed, allowing the light from the entrance to carry throughout the main floor. On the second floor, the building’s original skylights were exposed and retrofitted to create a natural light ambiance, the hardwood floor was refinished and an 1890s elevator, uncovered during the renovations, will become a focal point of a coffee nook.

There will be three membership options for Apiary Coworking. Fourteen 100-square-foot private offices will be available for lease as well as one four-person office which overlooks West St. Germain Street and that opens to a common space on the second floor. The offices are furnished with a sit-to-stand smart-desk, office chair and file cabinet. The offices are exclusive to the lessee and

able to be locked with key access.

The space will also include up to 10 dedicated desk memberships – a fully-furnished private desk space without the surrounding four walls of a private office. A flexible space membership allows a person month-to-month access to the common spaces of the building; a person could simply walk in and find a spot to work in the multiple living room, bistro or booth spaces or utilize a conference room or kitchen.

No matter the membership, all coworkers have access to private spaces for phone calls, conference rooms, the full kitchen, bathrooms and lockers, and the utilities, internet, commercial printing and maintenance are included in the flat-fee rent. Tenants will have after-hours access for unconventional working hours or for the opportunity to host larger meetings or gatherings.

“Bring your laptop, plug it in and you’re good to go,” said Hicks who will double in his roles of coworking inhabitant and office manager.

The couple expects the idea of coworking to appeal to a variety of industries. They envision the space working for anyone but named attorneys, photographers, insurance agents, real estate brokers and sales representatives whose territories are the St. Cloud area.

“It has to be a mixture of different tenant types or else it won’t work,” Hicks said.

Schlichting-Hicks agreed.

“It’s more vibrant, more collaborative, interesting and fun to go to work every day if it’s a mix of industries,” she said.

And, as the two open their building, they are excited to bring the opportunity of working independently but not alone.

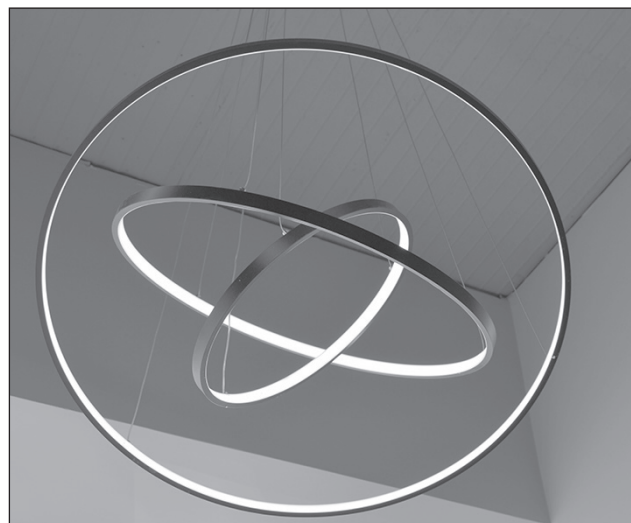
“You still have that social interaction,” Hicks said. “I can be in (my office) and shut the door and make a phone call, but I can also leave the door open and talk with my office neighbor about work or about anything else. That’s the big draw to coworking. That, I knew, was going to be a big thing for me. That is what I was looking for as a user.”

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An unconventional light hangs above a common space at Apiary Coworking Dec. 31 in St. Cloud. The building will incorporate bright colors and a modern feel with historical aspects of the property.



Fourteen 100-square-foot private offices are available at Apiary Coworking Dec. 31 in St. Cloud. Private offices will be furnished with sit-to-stand smart-desks, office chairs and filing cabinets.

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