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Feeling Isolated Working from Home? The Collective NWX Offers Community Workspace for All

BY RONNI WILDE — CBN REPORTER ON DECEMBER 12, 2019 BUSINESS & INDUSTRY, E-HEADLINES

(The Clearwater Crossing Building | Photo by Ronni Wilde)

From home-based entrepreneurs who occasionally just need a place to conduct meetings to start-up businesses searching for a space to set up permanent shop, The Collective NWX offers a lovely locale for independent workers to call home.

Located on the corner of Clearwater and NW Crossing drives, The Collective NWX is on the second floor of the Clearwater Crossing Building and is a co-working space with huge windows and lots of natural light streaming in. With views of the Cascades, Discovery Park and the surrounding neighborhood, The Collective NWX is modern and open in design. The space also has a homey, comfortable feeling, complete with a full kitchen, showers and an inside wall on which to securely hang your bike if needed.

“We are truly a mom and pop organization,” said Sara Odendahl, owner/managing partner of The Collective NWX. “That’s what sets us apart from the others. We know there are other co-working spaces in Bend, but they have different focuses. Some are tech-oriented, some are more geared for

the outdoor industry. The Collective NWX is a 'come one, come all,' regardless of profession, age, gender or status. Our tagline is 'Community co-working for all.'"

Odendahl said she does not see The Collective NWX as competing with other co-working spaces in the area; it will just broaden the options for small-business owners and telecommuters. "Bend is such a collaborative town. People have been really open and helpful. I have met with managers of other collective spaces and communicated with them. People are going to find the space that's right for them."

Odendahl and her husband, Kent, co-owner and creative partner of The Collective NWX, relocated here from Denver this past July. "Like so many who have moved to Bend, we had come here to visit and fell in love with it. So we tried to figure out how to get here," she said. "We have lots of family here, and had told them we wanted to do something entrepreneurial. My cousin is a real estate broker here and told us about the Clearwater Crossing building." The Odendahls had no experience operating a co-working space, she said, but Kent had been working from home in Denver for a company based in New Jersey, so he understood the isolation that can come with that.

"Our mission is to foster a sense of community for all members and to enable strong and sustainable connections to the local businesses and nonprofit organizations of Bend and Central Oregon," he said. "Working at home can be an isolating experience, and our goal with The Collective is to create a workspace to expand professional connections while cultivating creativity and collaboration for our members."

"We did our research and found that more than 12 percent of the people here work from home," said Sara Odendahl. "The second level of this building presented itself well for this type of business, so we moved here and started from ground zero," she said. Five months later, The Collective NWX is receiving the last of its finishing touches, with a soft opening planned this month and grand opening festivities slated for January.

"My nine-year-old asked about a ribbon-cutting," said Odendahl. "I wasn't sure about that, but when I found out that the Bend Chamber does that a lot, we got excited. We'll do a preview opening in December, then the public grand opening and fun ribbon-cutting in January."

The biggest challenges in creating The Collective NWX, she said, were in securing the Small Business Administration loan and having to start over with the networking aspect of business. "Right now, we are new to Bend. My husband and I both had robust careers in Denver. If we were in Denver, we'd have a 20-year network to leverage; we don't have that here." In their efforts to get the small business loan, Odendahl said her background as a lobbyist was helpful. "We had to really go up the

chain in the SBA to prove that this business met their criteria. We had to whittle the square peg to fit into the round hole,” she said.

Despite these challenges, however, Odendahl said working with the vendors and partners on the project has been hugely successful. “Bend Trend Homes, the owner of the building, has been amazing in building out the space, and Hyphn, the interior designer, brought in our vision for the space. We are very pleased with how it’s turned out. I feel like we’ve created a really beautiful space.”

Directly across the street from Summit High School, the 5,500-square-foot Collective has wide open spaces, cozy nooks, dedicated desks, private offices, conference rooms, couches and cushy chairs, countertops spaces against windows that face outside, a full kitchen and a 550-square-foot heated terrace. “People have different ways in which they like to work. It’s well-suited to meet the members’ needs, wherever they are on the spectrum,” she said. Use of the facility is based on memberships and runs the gamut from one-day passes to 24/7 access to private offices. All memberships include use of the community areas, café and outdoor spaces. Also included are high-speed technology, access to phone booths for private calls, a fully stocked beverage bar with coffee, tea and kombucha, members’-only happy hours with local beer and networking opportunities and membership programming. Ala carte membership benefits include mail delivery, an answering service, meeting planning and other options. The Collective NWX is dog-friendly, so four-legged friends are welcome to come and network, too.

“People often get siloed into their work,” said Odendahl. “Engineers sometimes only talk with other engineers, artists only talk with other artists, etc. This facility creates a natural collaboration, where people will talk to people in other industries. Engineers will talk with artists, and it is a cross-functional environment. This can really help people gain new perspectives on things.” She continued, “Our members will have opportunities to do business with each other. That’s an organic byproduct of something like this.”

The basic hours of the building are 7am to 7pm, but Odendahl said that members with dedicated offices and desks will have special security passes allowing 24-hour/7-day-a-week access. The bottom level of Clearwater Crossing will house a gym and personal training facility, and the third level will be home to private office suites. There will also be a local street taco restaurant onsite.

“There are so many small businesses on this side of town. It’s really cool to be able to support these small businesses in their efforts. There’s a cool vibe going on here.”

The Collective NWX is currently providing tours and taking reservations. To schedule a tour, contact Sara Odendahl at sara@work-collective.com or 303-506-2348.
work-collective.com