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## New business incubator opens at Arnold Gregory site in Albion

By Tom Rivers, Editor Posted 26 September 2016 at 7:32 am

Photos by Tom Rivers

Local officials joined Ben DeGeorge of the DeGeorge Property Group on Friday for a ribbon-cutting and open house for the Orleans Business Center, a new business incubator at the Arnold Gregory Office Complex, a former hospital on South Main Street in Albion.

The following are pictured, from left: Jamaal Stevens, vice president of operations for DeGeorge; Ben DeGeorge; Donna Saskowski, executive director of The Arc of Orleans and Genesee ARC (a tenant at Arnold Gregory); State Assemblyman Steve Hawley; Diane Blanchard, manager of the Microenterprise Assistance Program in Orleans County; State Sen. Robert Ort; and Michael Kracker, deputy chief of staff for Congressman Chris Collins.

DeGeorge bought the building from Ray Lissow in December 2014. DeGeorge said Lissow was creative in redeveloping the former hospital, a 56,000-square-foot building that closed in the late 1980s.

The building is now home to 16 different tenants, including six that have moved to Arnold Gregory in the past year. The new incubator is in the suite that was used by Dr. John Thompson, a family physician who has moved out of the area.

The Orleans Business Center has 4,000 square feet. There are rooms for 10 to 12 units who can share a copier, signage, WiFi, a conference room and a gym.

Samantha Marchincin, left, is the first tenant in the Orleans Business Center. She is pictured with Diana Blanchard, manager of the Microenterprise Assistance Program.

Marchincin took the 10-week small business training program run by MAP last spring. She has started a business, Muze, that offers social media services for musicians.

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The 200 square feet of space in the incubator "is just perfect for me," she said. She wanted a low-cost physical space for the business. If Muze grows, she said she would like for a bigger location.

That is the goal of the incubator, to offer professional space to a new business. DeGeorge and economic development officials hope the business will outgrow the incubator and settle into a storefront or bigger office space.

"This is an affordable business startup," Blanchard said.

She is also using the Arnold Gregory for weekly classes for the MAP class after meeting in the Hoag Library in Albion. Arnold Gregory is more of a business setting and the MAP class has access to a bigger classroom space, with a bathroom and kitchenette, Blanchard said.

Some of the other tenants at Arnold Gregory include The Arc of Orleans Rainbow Preschool, Catholic Charities, Dr. Rumble (dentist), Lake Plains Medical (doctor's office), Restore, Neil Lewis (chiropractor), Different Strokes Massage, utility company field office, Miracle Ear, Pathstone, Northpoint Chapel, Mental Health Association of Genesee and Orleans Counties, Keeler Construction, Venture Forth (home care agency) and New Direction Youth and Family Services.

The Arc also opened a coffee and snack shop in the the lobby by the main entrance last year. DeGeorge said about 275 people visit the building each day.

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