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## Developers choose Edwardsville for site of a new industrial park

By JIM DAVIS  
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Developers plan a \$36 million industrial park in Edwardsville. When completed, in roughly five years, the MidPoint Corporate Centre could include nine buildings containing 1 million square feet of space.

Rapid-Built Properties LLC announced plans for the 70-acre park this week. Work on roads and other infrastructure will begin in about a month.

Steve Coon, a principal with Rapid-Built, said the Edwardsville location and land price make the project attractive. The site, southwest of Interstate 435 and Kansas Highway 32, puts the park equidistant from downtown Kansas City and Sprint Corp.'s headquarters in Overland Park.

Coon said the land price, at \$2.25 to \$2.75 a square foot, will distinguish the park. City incentives also will cut taxes on the project in half for 10 years.

Barney Karbank, principal of B.A. Karbank & Co. and one of the area's most prolific industrial developers, said Edwardsville is a good spot.

The once-remote location has become increasingly popular among industrial users such as Fastenal Co., a Minnesota-based distributor of nuts, bolts, tools and construction supplies that moved a warehouse from Kansas City. Additional attention comes from the Kansas Speedway, which opened last year in nearby Kansas City, Kan.

Karbank said he's concerned about the site's flood potential, but Rapid-Built principal Terry O'Leary said the park's land stayed dry during the 1993 flood.

O'Leary said alternative locations in Johnson County are becoming harder to find. Lenexa is approaching buildout capacity for industrial space, he said, and Olathe wants higher-finish, higher-tech develop-

ment along its Kansas Highway 10 corridor.

O'Leary said he's not concerned about sluggish demand for industrial space that has boosted vacancies in the past year. By the time MidPoint's first building opens in the third quarter of this year, he said, the recession will be over.

"We are hitting it on the upswing," O'Leary said.

Industrial vacancies have been boosted by an overhang of older, bulk warehouse space, O'Leary said. The available supply of Class A product remains scant, he said.

Mark Long, a broker with The Zimmer Cos., said he's confident the current users' market for industrial space will return to equilibrium.

When that happens, lease and sales prices for these properties will rebound, Long said.

MidPoint's developers expect to construct a small flex-tech building on a speculative basis, without a signed tenant. Remaining construction would require tenant commitments.

Coon said he expects to sell about half of the property to other developers and retain the rest for development by his group.

Because the park and its buildings have been designed, new space can be delivered quickly — in fewer than 10 months, about half the usual time. Users can choose from three kinds of buildings: flex-tech, office-warehouse and bulk warehouse space.

MidPoint's developers plan other projects in Kansas City and elsewhere that also could include office space.

Coon is a vice president with Colliers Turley Martin Tucker in Kansas City. O'Leary, formerly with Colliers, is now self-employed.

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