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## **AltonWorks Expands Regional Innovation Focus with Appointment TechSTL’s Emily Hemingway to Serve as Wedge Innovation Center Executive Director**

**Alton, IL – Monday, March 11, 2024** – AltonWorks has taken a big step to expand regional innovation with the appointment of TechSTL Executive Director Emily Hemingway to serve as the Executive Director of the Wedge Innovation Center. The Wedge is scheduled to open in November 2024.

Hemingway, who has over 20 years of national experience in growing technology networks, will work with AltonWorks to cultivate a vibrant ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship in Alton and beyond. She will be responsible for the strategic direction, operational excellence, and overall success of the Wedge including leasing and sponsorship opportunities, business support services, innovative programming, mentorship, coaching and networking opportunities, and access to funding resources. She will build and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders, including universities, investors, corporations, and government agencies.

“Adding Emily to the Wedge team is a real coup for AltonWorks,” said Alton resident and AltonWorks CEO John Simmons. “There are dozens of technology networks across the bi-state area. When the people within those networks collaborate for the betterment of the entire region, their impact magnifies opportunity for everyone. Emily will bring her expertise, networks and know-how to Alton and southern Illinois to assist in helping us launch the many innovative programs we have planned to increase jobs, businesses and opportunities to the people of Alton and beyond.”

The Wedge will support early-stage, growth-driven companies through education, mentorship, and financing. It will provide remote and permanent workspace for individuals, teams, startups, and established companies that want to accelerate their businesses or develop new technologies, products, or systems. The Wedge will also serve as a workforce training center, digital hub for the \$20 million fiber network and will help move Alton into the digital economy.

Emily is the Founding Executive Director of TechSTL, the recently established regional tech council that launched in 2022 under the leadership of the St. Louis Development Corporation. Having exited SLDC at the end of 2023, TechSTL is now a fully independent 501(c)(6) organization and is working to expand services across the 15-county metro. Now with over 500 organizational members and a network of 30,000 innovators, Emily and the TechSTL team bring a robust suite of resources to Alton.

“I’m very passionate about both urban and rural development,” said Hemingway. “They are both essential for a healthy, growing economy. The relationship between the Wedge and TechSTL will help create a larger innovation and technology presence across the region, better connect Missouri and Illinois, and help position the Wedge as a ‘center of gravity’ in the region.” Hemingway believes one of the biggest strengths of combining her work with TechSTL

and the Wedge is to help expand the pie in ways that help bring more opportunities to everyone.

A primary goal of innovation centers like the Wedge is to help entrepreneurs and new businesses grow and succeed. Innovation centers provide members with resources, amenities, educational opportunities, access to mentors, experts and like-minded professional to support for their goals. Innovation centers also bring jobs, tax dollars and benefits to cities that would otherwise not be available.

“The successful revitalization of any community involves both retaining the population that currently lives in the community as well as attracting new residents, visitors and businesses,” said Simmons. “The Wedge Innovation Center is designed to be a catalyst to that effort by providing a ‘center of gravity’ as Emily puts it in Alton that will inspire people to remain here, move here, work and play here.

The Wedge Innovation Center will offer the following building amenities to those who lease space, utilize the facility as a remote workspace or for those who take advantage of the training and development programs that will be offered through the Wedge.

**Building Amenities**

- 24/7 Building Access for Members
- Bike Storage
- Showers and Locker Rooms
- Lounge
- Shared Kitchen
- Vending
- Unlimited Gourmet Local Coffee and Tea
- Craft Beer (Free on Thursday)
- Meeting Rooms with Online Scheduling
- Private Phone Booths
- Concierge Services
- Mother’s Rooms with sink & refrigerator

- Cleaning Service and Sanitization Products
- Lounge overlooking the Mississippi River
- Rooftop terraces overlooking the River
- Secured Parking with EV Charging Stations

**Productivity**

- Dedicated Community Manager
- Meeting Rooms with Online Scheduling
- Business Class Color Copier, Scanner,
- Print Stations, Shredder

- High-Speed Enterprise Grade Fiber
- Options for Private Ethernet Network
- Concierge Mail Service
- Dedicated Zoom Rooms

**Community**

- Exclusive Members-Only Events and Programming
- Community Events and After-Hours
- Hosted Meetups
- Connect with Developers and Creatives

**About AltonWorks**

*AltonWorks is a social impact redevelopment company focused on the revitalization of Historic Downtown Alton as a healthy, thriving, walkable city. AltonWorks was founded on the principles of livability, environmental stewardship, social justice, and inclusivity and believes rebuilding communities for optimum social impact. As an intermediary organization, AltonWorks offers thought leadership, planning, convening, and connecting, adding capacity to the Region’s ability to attract funding, expand social impact, catalyze economic growth, and anchor downstate recovery.*

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