



HEATHER CHARLES staff photographer

Jon Willette, left, Avalon Copy Center of America's chief operating officer, and Aaron Landers, production manager, work in their new downtown office in Buckingham Commons, the former Artcraft Optical building on Allen Street.

First business tenant opens in former Artcraft factory

DAVID TYLER

STAFF WRITER

The first tenant in Buckingham Commons opened its doors for business Monday, marking a milestone in the former downtown factory's conversion to a mix of office space and loft apartments.

Avalon Copy Centers of America, a Syracuse-based

company that provides printing and copying services to businesses, has moved into 4,600 square feet at the former home of Artcraft Optical on Allen Street near the Inner Loop and Frontier Field.

Chief Executive Officer Jon Denney said Avalon currently employs five people and could add 10 more

before the end of the year.

Denney said he was impressed by the quality and location of the space in the building.

"Geographically, it's perfect," he said. "Every one of our orders includes free pickup and delivery, so proximity to downtown and the highways is key."

Avalon also has an oper-

ation in Utica.

"They're a new business coming in from outside Rochester, and obviously that expansion is good," said Buckingham principal Larry Glazer of Avalon.

Artcraft Optical moved from the seven-story building in late 2000. Artcraft

AVALON, PAGE 7D

Avalon

FROM PAGE 8D

owner Tom Eagle had considered turning the property into lofts but eventually sold to Rochester developer Buckingham Properties.

Buckingham is converting the building's first two floors into office space and the top five into 36 loft apartments. The project is expected to cost about \$4.8 million.

Financial terms of the five-year deal were not disclosed, but Buckingham Properties has been asking \$14 per square foot for leases, according to a listing for the building on Loopnet.com.

Glazer said renovations are on schedule and renting of the residential units could begin by June or July. Another business tenant, KAFL Insurance, expects to move in by June, he said.

A rooftop deck that looks down into Frontier Field is also planned.

Buckingham Properties has signed an agreement to buy a large portion of the former Genesee Hospital. It owns more than 6.5 million square feet of real estate from Syracuse to Le Roy, Genesee County.

Buckingham's downtown holdings include the 150 State St. headquarters of the Rochester Business Alliance, the Michaels Stern lofts on North Clinton Avenue and Water Street Commons lofts on North Water Street. □

DTYLER@DemocratandChronicle.com