

Best in Real Estate

WINNER

Industrial and Warehouse Development or Redevelopment

## Open Access Technology International Inc.

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CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Open Access Technology International Inc. wasn't locked into a specific geographic region when it started the search for a new headquarters. The quest took it around the state, and even to other parts of the country.

Instead of finding a location in the suburbs or beyond, the Plymouth-based company, which provides software solutions for the energy industry, found its new home in an unexpected place: Northeast Minneapolis, in a building previously owned by Honeywell.

While Open Access (OATI) wasn't necessarily looking for an existing building, the 167,000-square-foot Honeywell location met important criteria required to build an ultra-high-tech Tier IV data center to house OATI's advanced power automation systems. On the must-have list for any property was ample communication connectivity and infrastructure redundancy.

At the Honeywell property, electricity comes from multiple power substations and there is access to redundant fiber connections — enough that OATI can have up to four times the needed capacity. The building, which was previously a data center, had 27,000 square feet of raised floor on the first level to accommodate the necessary heating and cooling elements required.

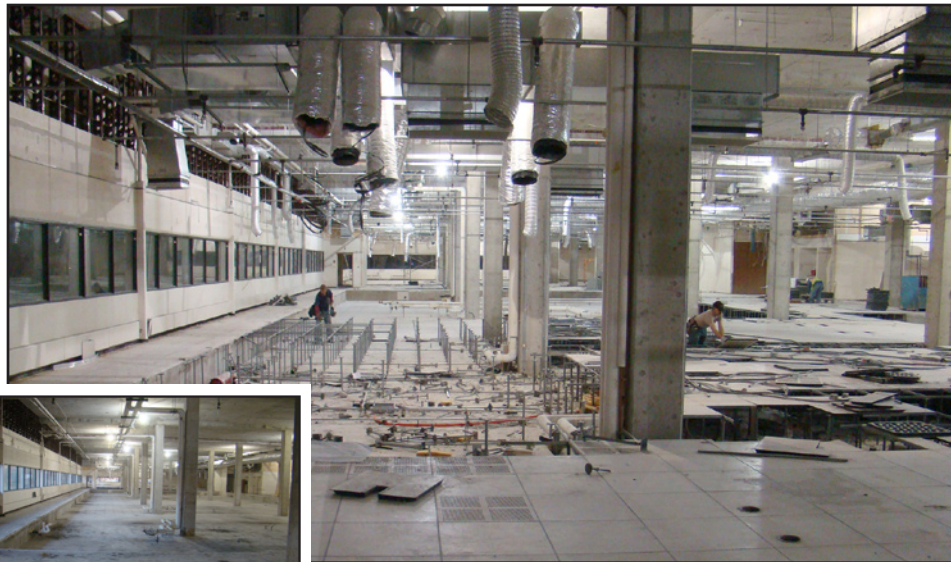
"What pushed us over the edge on this property was the city of Minneapolis," said Mary Brown, executive vice president of OATI. "They made us feel welcome."

The city also helped figure out financing for the \$30 million redevelopment project. It provided \$25 million, which came from the Minneapolis Common Bond Fund Revenue Bond program.

It's the largest such bond project done by the city to date, said Charles Curtis, senior economic development specialist for the city.

OATI's relocation to Minneapolis and redevelopment plans for the former Honeywell building were attractive to the city because of future job creation and real estate tax potential, Curtis said. "They are a very strong company and fit into the mold of our public purpose."

Indeed, Brown said the company anticipates adding an estimated 200 jobs over the next



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Open Access Technology dug underneath the building it moved into to install miles of piping for its tech needs.

three years, and predicted the new headquarters should accommodate OATI's needs for the next 25 to 30 years.

OATI purchased the property in May 2009 for \$6.1 million and started redevelopment in March 2010. The building was gutted and re-fitted with the infrastructure needed. The project included digging underneath the building and laying more than 65 miles of piping. The building became operational in December, and Brown expects the final phase of the moving process to begin this May.

"One of our biggest problems wasn't with the building, but with the hardware configurations that we'd chosen to implement," Brown said. "There had never been a successful implementation of the configuration we'd designed anywhere in North America. We had to work very closely with the hardware and software vendors to make this a successful implementation."

The overall scale of this project, as well as the use of an existing structure caught the attention of Best in Real Estate judge Arvid Povilaitis, chief operating officer of Minneapolis-based Meritex Enterprises Inc.

"It's a very impressive facility," he said. "They

### STATS

Value: **\$30 million+**  
Location: **3660 Technology Drive, Minneapolis**  
Size: **167,000 square feet**  
Ground breaking: **March 2010**  
Completed: **February 2011**

### PLAYERS

Owner of building: City of Minneapolis  
Tenants: 3660 Technology Drive, as tenant, and OATI as subtenant  
Developer: OATI  
General contractor: Kalway Construction  
Architect: Elness Swenson Graham Architects Inc.  
Interior designer: Elness Swenson Graham Architects Inc.  
Engineer: Michaud Cooley Erickson  
Legal representation: Faegre & Benson  
Finance provider: City of Minneapolis, Common Bond Fund Revenue Bond Program  
Title company: First American Title Insurance Co.  
Other key parties: Kalway Construction Co., Electric Resource Contractors, Schadegg Mechanical Inc., Olsen Fire Protection Inc., Nardini Fire Equipment Co. and Armor Security Inc.

took a legacy, outdated Honeywell facility and converted it to a new, 4G level of technology to meet the demands of the market."