

# SPRINGFIELD BUSINESS JOURNAL

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with 15 other organizations, including the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, CoxHealth, BKD LLP and Connell Insurance Inc.

“All of our partners demonstrate a commitment to fostering entrepreneurship in the region,” Kincaid said, noting the eFactory partners with many regional business development groups to provide services to its clients.

“Our clients are facing many decisions and challenges as they ramp up operations. Services and mentorship from industry experts and practitioners provide tremendous added value as they are making critical decisions in business formation, contracts and growth strategies.”

Ankrom and crew are working on a seminar presentation on intellectual property to kick off their eFactory presence. However, with the support of every attorney in the office, he said the group would cover a variety of topics, from real estate to litigation and employment law.

“It’s important to have a physical presence there, not just talks by telephone,” said Richard Walters, Spencer Fane’s managing partner in Springfield. “This is something our younger attorneys initiated as an opportunity to work with their peers.”

“It’s exciting for us to see this initiative,

**“Our partners demonstrate a commitment to fostering entrepreneurship.”**

—Brian Kincaid  
The eFactory

## Entrepreneurial Ally

Spencer Fane attorneys partner with The eFactory for free legal advice

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With so many innovative ideas floating around The eFactory, startup entrepreneurs must protect their intellectual property. Spencer Fane LLP wants to help.

The Springfield office of the Kansas City-based law firm cemented a partnership with Missouri State University’s business incubator late this summer. Kicking off in the first quarter of 2016, Spencer Fane’s 14 local lawyers will split time at The eFactory, keeping weekly office hours for free consultations.

“We decided we wanted a different approach, not always going after the big fish clients. We see value in investing in small business and there was no better place to start than The eFactory,” said attorney Derek Ankrom, who’s spearheading the effort

for Spencer Fane. “These are the potential future leaders of industry and our city.”

Ankrom said while entrepreneurs may be motivated thinkers and inventors shining a light on new ideas, many still are in the dark when it comes to the laws of business formation and how to protect their inventions.



**Brian Kincaid:**  
Partnerships make The eFactory a one-stop shop for startups.

“As any business grows, with it grow problems,” he said. “From something such as protecting your intellectual property to maintaining your workforce, the larger you get, the more corporate regulations there are to follow.

“A lot of these guys, it’s just been them or a small staff for so long, they’ve not had to deal with a lot of regulation. It’s only natural they would have

a lot of questions.”

Free to The eFactory’s 37 tenants, Ankrom said Spencer Fane’s lawyers would offer business advice from a legal perspective and legal foresight helping

stop future problems. They’ll stop short of any billable actions.

“There may be certain problems or issues where they need to engage counsel,” he said. “Of course, we would be happy to help, but they would also be free to retain anyone they choose.”

The agreement is a valuable pool of future potential for Spencer Fane and an added asset for The eFactory.

“This partnership arose from cultivating relationships with the firm and understanding that there was a mutual value proposition,” said Brian Kincaid, eFactory business incubator director, via email. “These partnerships allow The eFactory to be a one-stop shop for startup and growth companies to grow in Springfield.”

This isn’t the first eFactory partnership designed to bolster tenant knowledge. The business incubator also partners

and they have the full support of the partners.”

Walters said he values the time and commitment by his younger counterparts, saying it’s important to form these relationships, not only with eFactory tenants, but also with other partners of the business incubator.

“It’s important to make sure the time the attorneys spend is recognized and supported in an economical matter,” he said. “We don’t want financial restrictions or burdens impeding our investment in business.”

Walters said he hopes to break down the formal walls and expose these entrepreneurs to the legal world.

“They are a creative people,” he said. “We want to make them legally sound as well.”



**Richard Walters:**  
Spencer Fane fully supports our attorneys’ time investment.