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John Quarton Discusses the New Petrick Idea Center

Eric Stock
WGLT, Illinois State University

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WGLT Interview with John Quarton on October 12, 2023

Announcer: A big part of job creation is developing more job creators. McLean County has seen a spike in new businesses. Now it's looking for more ways to help those startups grow. WGLT's Eric Stock reports and the latest edition of our job's series.

Eric Stock: The Bloomington Normal Economic Development Council wants to help create an innovation corridor along Main Street connecting Illinois State and Illinois Wesleyan University's. Illinois Wesleyan has opened a new Makerspace for students. It features 3d printers, laser cutters and other gear to build prototypes, and the university wants to build on that. John Quarton is director of the Petrick Idea Center at Wesleyan. The University is raising money to build a new center where students can develop business ideas beyond the classroom and possibly see them to completion.

John Quarton: You don't create stellar athletes by asking them to develop their skills in their dorm rooms.

Stock: Quarton says if students can get that kind of help in Bloomington Normal, the area will get noticed as an entrepreneurial hub. He says that'll attract investors, and that will keep those aspiring entrepreneurs here,

Quarton: But oftentimes with ventures of that of that nature. They tend to go where the startup funding is available, and that's typically not been here in the Midwest, but I'd like to think that that can change.

Stock: The Idea Center at Illinois Wesleyan would be student centered.