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TEA, EOF to Open New International Employee Ownership Center in December

State of the art facility will dramatically expand advocacy, education, and conferencing capacity in service of employee ownership mission

WASHINGTON, DC—The ESOP Association and the Employee Ownership Foundation are thrilled to announce the establishment and December opening of the International Employee Ownership Center—an all-new headquarters, advocacy, education, and conferencing facility for the employee ownership community. Located just blocks from the United States Capitol, the new facilities will include an education center capable of holding more than 200 attendees for classroom style learning sessions; a cutting edge full-production digital audio/video studio for online and virtual education and content; facilities for hosting and convening groups of lawmakers, staff, and scholars; and staff offices for the larger operations envisioned over the next decade for both organizations.

Located in the recently developed Capitol Crossing complex on Capitol Hill and within walking distance of the United States Capitol and the U.S. Department of Labor, the primary regulatory agency for ESOPs. TEA and EOF will use the facilities to host member companies, employee owners, members of Congress and their staff, and other leading government agency officials. The organizations also intend to convene meetings with international guests and domestic leaders in the not-for-profit and think tank communities in collaborative sessions to advance employee ownership. The facility will also become the new home-base for advocacy-day and frequent lobbying activities of TEA's new Employee Owner Action Network (EOAN) comprised of employee owners from across the nation.

"Over a year ago we began to examine the feasibility of a facility like this and what it could mean for the employee ownership community," said Gary Shorman, Chairman of the TEA Board of Directors. "It has been thrilling to bring this from idea to reality, but even more exciting is what it will mean for Employee Ownership in the years to come. These facilities can be transformational for employee ownership in Washington, DC, and TEA's ability to deliver the highest possible value to our current and future membership."

TEA and EOF will move into the new International Employee Ownership Center on December 15, 2020, marking the end of a nearly 18-month process that involved close collaboration with the Board of Directors and other leaders.

“From a programmatic and operational standpoint, we needed different facilities to meet our membership’s needs. We were out of space in an outdated and poorly located building. So, we made a list of everything we could imagine the Employee Ownership movement could become in the next decade—and that is what we built for,” said James Bonham, President and CEO. “I simply cannot wait for the first convening of the community in Washington early next May at our National Conference. These are facilities worthy and reflective of the size and importance of the employee ownership movement in America today.”

Association leadership evaluated the project both before and during the current COVID-19 pandemic, and all operational and aspirational drivers to move forward with the project remained valid, even in a COVID and post-COVID environment.

“After COVID hit, we of course took a beat and asked if this continued to be the right move for the future of TEA and EOF. The unanimous conclusion was to build for our community’s future,” Bonham continued. “Across all metrics, the main drivers for the facility remained valid regardless of COVID—expanded advocacy, learning and education, development of our own digital and on-line content, the need for a gathering place for academic and policy thought leaders. It is all necessary for the future.

“Because we will have our own space, we can become much more innovative and expansive in how we conduct outreach and education,” Bonham continued. “We can be much more forward leaning in imagining ways to bring our community, and those who hold sway over our futures, together.”

On Capitol Hill. The new Center is located on Capitol Hill, four blocks from the U.S. Capitol. Beyond the conferencing and educational spaces, the expansive rooftop terrace of the building complex is built to host meetings and world-class events in the shadow of the Capitol dome. Expect these spaces to be leveraged for political action, education, scholarship and other high-level events to benefit employee owners across the nation.

Expanding Multimedia Content Capabilities. The new center will include a fully equipped digital production studio, enabling TEA and EOF to efficiently and cost-effectively produce original audio/video content, programming, and communications. With a recognition of the dominant role played by digital media in today’s online world, this studio will provide new capabilities for enhancing our live and virtual events, member-focused educational content, and advocacy efforts.

Growing Capacity. The new International Employee Ownership Center and Advocacy will enable TEA and EOF to grow over the next decade while expanding our efforts in advocacy, education, and content production, among others.

Hosting Meetings Onsite. One of our largest needs each year is renting space for meetings of all kinds – the new center drives to the heart of solving this problem for both TEA and EOF and creates huge new opportunities for collaboration and leadership.

A Grand Opening and Welcome is in early planning stages, likely to take place during the May 2021 ESOP Association National Conference and Advocacy Day next spring. Also stay tuned for additional upcoming news about how you or your company can help with the new International Employee Ownership Center and receive permanent recognition at the Center for your contribution.

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