

Kudos To Abul Islam

Abul A. Islam's plan to build a new 13-story headquarters building downtown for the Middletown engineering and technology firm he founded 17 years ago is welcome news for Hartford on many levels.

The AI Technology Center will add a sleek and stylish anchor for Constitution Plaza at the eastern gateway to the city near the Founders Bridge. And the pending influx of engineers and technology specialists from AI Engineering Inc. will complement the Connecticut Science Center that is scheduled to open across State Street in the spring.

Plus, Islam intends to seek out other engineering and technology firms as tenants to fill the building that will include roughly 200,000 square feet of office and retail space.

The technology center will rise on the site of Broadcast House, the former WFSB studios, which Islam bought earlier this year.

The AI Technology Center announcement comes just weeks after Northeast Utilities Inc., which owns Connecticut Light & Power and other energy companies, said it planned to move its headquarters from Berlin to a former Phoenix Cos. building, also located across State Street.

These very positive developments come at a time when economic sentiment is scraping record lows. It takes the optimistic outlook of a successful entrepreneur like Islam to focus not on the present downturn but on the inevitable bounce back that is a year or two in the future.

Kudos to Islam. And welcome to Hartford. ■