

IIT's innovation center project gets rolling with \$10 million gift

By Lorene Yue  March 07, 2014

Illinois Institute of Technology's innovation center, a \$40 million **project announced in 2012**, is getting closer to reality.

The school today announced it hired John Ronan Architects of Chicago and Shepley Bulfinch of Boston as architects for the 100,000-square-foot building. IIT also announced that alumnus Ed Kaplan pledged \$10 million to the facility, which will be called the Ed Kaplan Family Institute for Innovation and Tech Entrepreneurship.

Construction could start as early as 2015, with occupancy taking place in 2017, the university said. In addition to an innovation center, the facility would house several existing IIT departments, including its Institute of Design and Leadership Academy.

Mr. Kaplan, a co-founder of bar-code printing firm **Zebra Technologies Corp.** of Lincolnshire, earned his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from IIT in 1965.

Mr. Kaplan and his wife, Carol, previously donated \$1 million to the innovation center, which aims to connect IIT's students and faculty with the school's technology park, which houses various startups. The couple also funded the Ed Kaplan Entrepreneurship Studies Program at IIT in 2000 and endowed the dean's position at the university's Armour College of Engineering.

John Ronan Architects has designed the Gary Corner Youth Center in Chicago and the Perth Amboy High School in New Jersey. Shepley Bulfinch has worked on the innovation lab at Harvard University's business school and the Smilow Cancer Hospital in New Haven, Conn.
