



Pratt Industries expands in Muhlenberg

The maker of advertising displays added eight jobs, bringing its total to 32

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Pratt Industries' Muhlenberg Township packaging plant has expanded and added eight employees, a move that is expected bring as many as 32 more jobs.

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"We went from 78,000 square feet to 114,000 square feet because our customer base has grown and will continue to grow in this region," said John Keck, vice president and general manager at Pratt Display, a division of Pratt Industries, Conyers, Ga. "This expansion will allow us to better service those customers."

Workers at the plant at 184 Tuckerton Road create corrugated cardboard displays for the end of aisles in grocery stores, cosmetic displays in drugstores or even cutout figures of famous people, among other box displays.

Pratt was reluctant to name its customers, but the list includes national brands.

"We have moved all manufacturing equipment into the new space and built new offices," Keck said. "No additional work is planned in the short term, but as the business expands there is always that possibility.

"As for product, we will be manufacturing in-store merchandising displays, graphic packaging and specialty items."

Jamal Abodalo, director of engineering and codes for Muhlenberg Township, said the difference between how the Pratt site in Muhlenberg looked in January when he toured the plant and how it looks now is amazing.

"It was a very dark, old building with really no life inside," Abodalo said. "At the grand opening, there actually were people in there assembling things. Life is back to normal. It went from an empty place to a very good place for people to work.

"Pratt moved to a neighboring location and expanded in a bigger building. It did not lose any production time."

Many local people may remember the company's previous name as Rock Solid Packaging & Display, which began in Shillington in 1988, moved to Reading in 2000 and then Muhlenberg in 2008.

In October 2011, Taurus Display Corp., the then-owner of Rock Solid Packaging & Display, entered a joint venture with Pratt Industries, according to Chris Bull, CEO of the Moorestown, N.J., packaging company.

Bull said it subcontracts its corrugated converted display work to the Muhlenberg company.

Bull confirmed that the display division in Muhlenberg was expanding to keep up with its clients.

Pratt's Keck said: "We brought in production from some of our other plants.

"Many of our national strategic customers asked us to expand our manufacturing footprint into the Northeast in order to satisfy more of their packaging and display needs in that region."

Pratt added eight employees to its Muhlenberg staff, bringing its total to 32.

"We expect to add another 32 as the business warrants," Keck said. "We are very confident of our future in this community. This is a good place to do business."

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The Pratt Industries plant in Muhlenberg Township has expanded from 78,000 square feet to 114,000 square feet of brightly lit space.