

BENCO DENTAL TO RELOCATE CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS TO CENTERPOINT COMMERCE & TRADE PARK EAST

(Spring, 2009) Mericle's speculative building program is helping another major Northeastern Pennsylvania employer grow its business locally.

Benco Dental (www.benco.com) will open its new corporate headquarters in CenterPoint Commerce & Trade Park East later this year, when its custom fit-out is completed by Mericle. The facility at 289-299 CenterPoint Boulevard in Jenkins Township will allow Benco to combine its corporate offices and main warehouse and is expected to be fully functional by November or December 2009, according to Lou Mangino, Benco's VP of Operations.

The building will have a total usable area of 272,800 square feet, making it "the largest dental equipment showroom in North America, with 24 operatories of dental equipment from all major vendors in all standard configurations," according to Benco President Chuck Cohen. The facility will feature two stories of office space and new benefits for associates that include closer parking, a quiet room, modern break rooms, and, in the future, a gym.

Currently, Benco's two facilities combine for approximately 164,000 square feet. The additional space and use of technology in the new headquarters will make warehouse operations more efficient, with more than 1.25 miles of zone-routed conveyor and a system that will remove trash boxes and move outbound packages directly onto trucks. The new warehouse will also have enough room to store Benco's entire inventory and eliminate the need for associates to double-handle products.

The new location, about nine miles north of Benco's current headquarters in Wilkes-Barre, was chosen for several reasons, according to Benco officials. CenterPoint offers convenient access to Interstates 81, 476, 380, 84, 80 and the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport. It is closer to UPS and FedEx centers, giving Benco the opportunity to take advantage of the latest available pickup times. The business park is also a central location for current employees, enabling Benco to attract new employees from the Scranton and Allentown areas. In addition, CenterPoint offers substantial tax benefits.

The building, originally 217,000 square feet, was recently constructed on speculation by Mericle, who is custom designing and remodeling various portions of the facility to accommodate Benco. The work includes the construction of all offices, a mezzanine, a new front façade, as well as the expansion of power, doors, and parking, and installation of the warehouse equipment. More than 400 associates will work from the new facility, which has enough space to accommodate 10 years of growth.

Mericle Vice President Jim Hilsher coordinated the project for the company. "Benco is one of Northeastern Pennsylvania's premier employers, said Hilsher. We are pleased the company selected our new CenterPoint facility for its world headquarters."