

Equipment maker will open here

By Mike Grizzard
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Welex Inc., a manufacturer of high-performance plastics extrusion equipment, plans to expand into Greenville, according to the Pitt County Development Commission.

MORE ABOUT WELEX

According to the company Web site, Welex equipment is used by leading companies throughout the world to produce products for the following industries:

- Rigid packaging (food, drug, and industrial)
- Disposable products (cups, plates, bowls)
- Automotive
- Appliance
- Compounding & pellets (engineering resins, color compounding, recycling)
- Tubing (medical, industrial, and beverage applications)
- Sanitary ware (spas, enclosures)
- Pipe (HDPE, PE, water and gas)
- Profiles

Based in Blue Bell, Pa., near Philadelphia, the company purchased the former Prince Manufacturing building at 2 investment projections are approximately \$3 million and at least 20 employees, according to the commission. Manufacturing equipment in the molding of raw plastics.

"We felt that our current manufacturing facility would not allow us to properly develop [our] extrusion systems in a manner," said Welex President Frank Nissel.

"The move to Greenville is a perfect blend of 'smart' manufacturing space coupled with a location that affords us a far greater number of customers from a more strategically situated facility."

The new facility in Greenville will be operating by mid-February, he added.

The company's corporate offices, including key management and engineering personnel, will remain in Blue Bell, and office and meeting facility will be set up in the Greenville plant.

The two locations will link using closed circuit Internet monitoring, web cams and conference capabilities.

"We wanted to ensure that we could maintain real-time communications with manufacturing, corporate and customer visits," Nissel explained.

According to the development commission, Welex General Manager Wayne Lewis worked closely with Richard Roberson of the N.C. Department of Commerce to determine which of the locations would best fit his needs.

PCDC Executive Director Wanda Yuhas also was involved in the recruitment process. She said an available facility meeting the needs of Welex was the biggest selling point.

The former Prince facility, built in 1988, has 63,075 square feet, including 37,200 square feet of manufacturing space and 24,000 square feet of warehouse space.

"This was, in some ways, one of the simplest projects we've ever had because the project was very driven by the availability of a building of a particular size, a particular style," Yuhas said, "having a particular kind of building available."

Yuhas said Lewis began with a long list of potential sites from a number of different states, including several facilities in North Carolina. The availability of the former Prince building and the Carolina site search maintained by the Department of Commerce.

Yuhas said no county or state incentives were involved in the deal. She said she expects Welex management operations to remain in Pennsylvania for now, although Lewis will have

"Our hope certainly is that once they're located here that they will continue to grow here, and that is our expectation," Yuhas said.

According to the company Web site, Welex has designed and built extrusion systems for more than 30 years. The company supplies extruders, co-extruders, gear pumps, sheet take-off systems to more than 70 countries worldwide. Welex equipment is used to produce products for the rigid packaging, disposable products, automotive and appliance industries.

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