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COVERING THE STATES OF NEW JERSEY, PENNSYLVANIA AND DELAWARE

By Tom Shaughnessy, J.G. Petrucci Co., Inc.

J.G. Petrucci breaks ground in Lehigh Valley Industrial Park VII on 80,000 s/f building

Last week J.G. Petrucci Co., Inc. broke ground in Lehigh Valley Industrial Park VII for an 80,000 s/f customer service center for Receivable Management Services.



Shaughnessy

Builders/developers begin site work on new projects many times throughout the year, but this one is truly a landmark for us, for RMS and its 800+ employees, for the city of Bethlehem, and for the Lehigh Valley as a whole.

RMS is currently located in Martin Tower, the former Bethlehem Steel headquarters building. After an extensive site search they chose a 12 acre site in the City of Bethlehem. This was great news for Mayor John Callahan and city officials. They had worked hard to keep the 800 RMS jobs within city limits. RMS had considered other options — green field sites across

the Lehigh Valley and in New Jersey. Instead they chose a brownfield redevelopment site.

It was not an easy choice, but Bethlehem was prepared to compete for the project and the job, and the \$10 million dollar investment that came with it. The city had a site ready for RMS. That didn't happen overnight, of course. Thanks to the city, Lehigh Valley Industrial Park, Inc., and federal, state and county investments, LVIP VII had taken shape.

We are at the advent of a new development season in the Lehigh Valley and across the country. Public policy has been restructured to recycle blighted, contaminated or obsolete former industrial sites for new uses.

At JGPCO we are pleased to be on the cutting edge of this process. In South Allentown, PA, we have formed a partnership with city agencies to redevelop a former Mack Truck site and construct a 90,000 s/f speculative multi-tenant

industrial building. In Bethlehem, PA, a new Lowe's Home Improvement Center will open in August on the 34 acre former Durkee Spice plant site where the 285,000 s/f building was demolished. In Hillside, NJ, we knocked down 16 obsolete buildings to make way for a 147,000 s/f distribution center for Garguilo Produce. In Allentown, PA, we will demolish the former Exide Battery plant and will clean up the site for a new retail center in 2007.

JGPCO is not the only company reinvesting in cities, boroughs and older townships. It is exciting to see new projects underway within the city limits of Easton, Philipsburg and in small boroughs like Glendon and Catasauqua. There is an amazing transformation underway and a great opportunity for the region.

Our design/build clients, by definition, desire larger, more modern buildings. Their first inclination is to look at suburban green field sites. Many are moving

from urban areas, taking jobs with them and leaving buildings vacant and deteriorated. For this reason, shovel-ready sites must be developed to attract and retain businesses... Not an easy job! One, however, that is crucial to a community's future.

Communities must set the stage for development. This is done in several ways, all essential: Extending infrastructure, demolishing blighted buildings, buying or condemning marginal adjacent properties and providing incentives through creative tax relief, grants and low-interest loans. Business location incentives are critical. By combining federal, state and regional and local programs, urban communities can level the playing field when competing with suburban sites.

The best prospect is often a business already in the community. RMS is a prime example of a successful retention effort. Good for them and good for Bethlehem! ■