

Movers & Makers

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— the manufacturers and distributors who drive growth, innovation, and opportunity across the region. Today, that legacy is stronger than ever, with new manufacturers investing and employment growing at three times the national rate.

More people now work in making and moving goods than in any other sector of the region's diverse economy — nearly 74,000 workers in all. That employment has grown by 70.9% since 2010, the start of the rebound from the Great Recession, compared to 23.2% nationally.

Global brands made in the Lehigh Valley include Crayola, Mack Trucks, Martin Guitars, and Peeps. "The Lehigh Valley is a manufacturing success story in America," said Don Cunningham, President & CEO of Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corporation (LVEDC). "Not only has the region rebuilt its manufacturing base back to being the largest part of our economy, but we've outpaced national manufacturing job creation by three times."

Manufacturing makes up 16% of the Lehigh Valley's economy, compared to 12% nationally. Nearly 700 manufacturers collectively produce an output of \$9 billion annually, placing the Lehigh Valley among the top 15% of manufacturing markets nationwide based on Gross Domestic Product.

Manufacturers recognize the Lehigh Valley's winning formula — a skilled workforce, prime location, and business environment that supports growth.

"We are growing in the Lehigh Valley and in Pennsylvania because we have a long history here and of finding skilled workers, high-quality suppliers, training partners, and a business environment that enables us to compete and win in the marketplace," Rob Albert, CEO of B. Braun of the Americas, Inc., said in September as the company announced a \$20 million expansion that will create 200 new jobs at its plant in Hanover Township, Lehigh County.

"Lehigh Valley also has the quality of life and the culture we need to retain our talent. Our people love living and working here," said Albert, who is a member of LVEDC's Board of Directors.

Based in Germany, B. Braun chose the Lehigh Valley as its U.S. headquarters in 1979. It now has multiple facilities here.

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro announced the expansion — the company's second in three years — during a visit to the B. Braun plant. The state contributed \$1.5 million to support the expansion and workforce training, citing the company's role in the state's economy.

In August, another German manufacturer, Bosch Rexroth Corporation, broke ground on a \$20 million, 50,000-square-foot logistics center adjacent to its North American hydraulics manufacturing hub in Bethlehem.

"This building is a statement — we believe in the future here," said Dr. Christina Franke, Executive Board Member for Production & Quality Management at Bosch Rexroth, which has operated in the Lehigh Valley since 1967.

Within a day's drive of one-third of the U.S. population, the Lehigh Valley offers a strategic location for manufacturing and distribution. Interstate highways, rail service, international airports, and nearby ports provide multiple options for getting products to market quickly.

The region's factory floors are fueled by a skilled workforce of 1.8 million within an hour's drive, supported by 11 colleges and universities that foster innovation and industry partnerships.

"This location made perfect sense — proximity to the ports and the workforce. We saw a big opportunity. All this made the Lehigh Valley a great location to make this investment," said Gokhan Kacmaz, Chief Financial Officer of Kervan USA.

In June, the Turkish candy company broke ground on a \$20 million facility in Bethlehem and Lower Nazareth townships that initially will be used for its U.S. headquarters and packaging and distribution, then will expand to manufacturing.

Other manufacturers that have expanded recently include Phoenix Tube (metal production), FLSmidth Cement (industrial equipment), and Bronkhorst USA (liquid and gas flow instruments).

Filter King (HVAC filters) and Myers Emergency & Power Systems (battery systems) opened new factories. Kerry Group (coffee roasting and extraction) announced plans for a new factory.

These investments underscore the Lehigh Valley's manufacturing diversity — encompassing semiconductors and technology, pharmaceuticals and diagnostics, metals, food and beverages, consumer goods, chemicals, and components for national defense, among other products.

"Lehigh Valley is unique in America," Cunningham said. "The region has rebuilt a manufacturing economy. We found a formula for Made in the USA."

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