

NEWS

Snappy moves headquarters to Marietta

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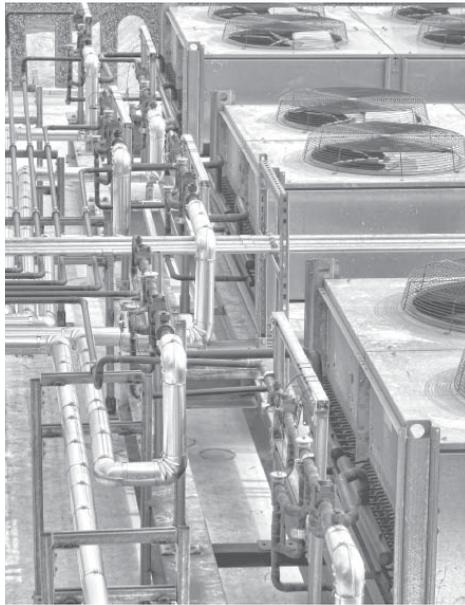
The leading supplier of metal pipes for the residential HVAC market is shifting its home base from Philadelphia to Marietta, Ga.

Snappy is in the process of moving its headquarters to Georgia and closing its Philadelphia plant. It plans to offset this change by increasing its manufacturing operations at other plants in Powder Springs, Ga., and Medina, N.Y.

The company will relocate its headquarters and eight current employees into an existing building on Johnson Ferry Road. It has hired three from the Atlanta area so far, with another three positions left to fill. Snappy CEO **George Judd** said he expects to hire three or four additional employees by the end of the year.

The Powder Springs plant has gained 25 new employees from the consolidation, bringing its total number to about 105. This was accomplished by expanding one shift at the plant and adding another partial shift. Although the workers at the Philadelphia plant were offered the chance to relocate, Judd said they all chose the severance package instead.

Judd said one reason Snappy is exiting



SHUTTERSTOCK

the Philadelphia market is that the lease was up for its headquarters. It also made good business sense.

"It was significantly and economically more feasible to manufacture our products in Georgia and ship them than it was to manufacture them up there," Judd said. "The headquarters were going to be attached to a facility that wasn't going to be in Philadelphia anymore. Since we had

to move, we wanted to be in a city where a plant was."

The Powder Springs plant has been in operation for more than 20 years and is the company's second-largest.

Snappy manufactures galvanized pipes and fittings for HVAC units. In January, it introduced its Laser-Cut Safety Fittings, an innovative technology that eliminates the jagged edges associated with traditional cutting methods, which makes installation safer. It also sells its Comfort Distribution Products, which include sheet metal, flex, grills, registers and diffusers, in bundles.

The company sells its products to everyone from big box retailers such as Home Depot and industrial commercial air conditioning distributors to small family-owned HVAC companies across the country.

Although Judd had been a member of Snappy's board of directors for two years, he didn't become CEO until last November, after he left his CEO position at **BlueLinx Corp.**, a \$1.6 billion building products distributor based in Atlanta. He has lived in the area for more than 20 years, and his expertise in the market helped guide the company's decision to move here.

"[BlueLinx] doesn't do heating and air conditioning, but they do construction projects ... I've been working on the construction side of the business for 30 years," Judd said. "I find that the customer groups are very similar; the difference is in selling metal products, not wood products."

Since the economy began to improve in 2010, Snappy's business has been on the upswing, but Judd was predicting a sharper recovery. Until last year, he was on the advisory board for **Harvard University's** Joint Center for Housing Studies, which forecasts housing trends.

"The increase is not as significant as most of us have forecast," he said. "The housing market was down 77 percent, and the numbers are still below where I expected."

As numbers continue to improve, Snappy and Judd are considering what steps to take next. The company is considering building a plant in the Southwest.

"Business is recovering," Judd said. "It's a fun time. We're expanding and we're looking at things, and that's why we're making those changes now."

Snappy is expected to be fully operational in metro Atlanta by July 18.

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