



## R E L A T E D   N E W S   A R T I C L E

### START-UP FURNITURE FIRM EXPANDING IN WHITSETT

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By Lloyd Whittington, The Business Journal

WHITSETT -- A furniture company founded a year ago is doubling its warehouse space and plans to increase employment by 40 percent this year following a "phenomenal" first year.

Legacy Classic Furniture, started in an apartment last spring by Kevin O'Connor, Richard Mihalik and Jerry Sagerdahl, topped \$20 million in sales in its first year, more than doubling its initial projections, said Mihalik, vice president of operations.

"We're well on our way to maybe doubling that this next year," he said. "It's so hard to gauge we're growing so fast."

Legacy, a furniture design firm, agreed this week to lease for 10 years another 75,800 square feet in Liberty Property Trust's Boulders property in eastern Guilford County, bringing its total to 151,600 square feet.

Meanwhile, Legacy is also investing between \$6 million and \$7 million to build a 350,000- square-foot warehouse in China for direct shipments.

The company expects to add 13 positions this year to its staff of 32, primarily with office positions, Mihalik said.

With the Boulders' lease, eastern Guilford County will have absorbed 290,000 square feet of leases in the past month, said Tom Townes, a broker with Triad Commercial Properties involved in the leases. Carolina Biological Supply leased another 213,000 in former Lucent Technologies properties.

Meanwhile, Berkshire Corp., a maker of clean environment supplies, is looking for another 70,000 in the area. The former DeSales Trading Co. building is about the only existing building available in that market, although Townes is marketing about 100 acres of former Lucent land for sale or build-to-suit projects.

"There is quite a bit of activity in that submarket, and, subject to the DeSales building being leased, there could be zero available inventory," Townes said.

The Legacy lease fills Liberty's industrial portfolio, although it has two 96,000-square-foot buildings under construction in the new Eagle Hill Business Park in Piedmont Centre in High Point. InMark USA, another furniture company, has committed to more than 70,000 square feet of the first one.

Liberty had considered selling the Boulders properties due to slow lease up, but now plans to hold them, said Skip Hill, vice president of marketing and leasing.

"Do I see momentum? I think we're on the cusp," Hill said. "We're gaining momentum with Reedy Fork and the Jaycees buying land (for a future golf course), but I still count the number of occupants and say it could be more."

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