

PACKAGING COMPANY EXPANDING IN WINSTON-SALEM

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WINSTON-SALEM - South Atlantic Packaging Corp. will move to a larger facility to accommodate the firm's growth, while keeping an eye on possible future expansion.

Jim Rucker, president of South Atlantic companies under the South Atlantic name, said the packaging firm will occupy a 64,000-square-foot building he bought at 3932 West Point Blvd. in south-west Winston-Salem.

Rucker started the packaging company in 2000. South Atlantic's primary business is in warehousing, and it also operates trucking, real estate and development businesses.

The packaging firm has 15 full-time employees. In 2001, the firm started its own staffing company. It now has between 150 and 200 temporary workers at its disposal, Rucker said, which it uses depending on how much work needs to be done in certain weeks.

Rucker said the growth of the company has been tied to retailers looking to package more items together for deals like two-for-one sales.

"That type of thing isn't done on the factory floor," he said. "Merchandisers are seeking alternatives as far as product offerings. One of our customers may have one product made in North Carolina and another in Puerto Rico and doesn't have a way to consolidate them into one package other than using a service like ours."

The West Point Boulevard facility is 50 percent larger than the 42,000-square-foot facility the packaging firm had been operating out of in Winston-Salem. When the company started in 2000, it operated out of a 30,000-square-foot facility, so it's been growing from the beginning, Rucker said.

The decision to purchase was based on the fact that Rucker Realty, an affiliated real estate company, had sold some properties recently. With the proceeds, it purchased the building and will technically lease it to the packaging division.

"We just needed a clean, newer facility where we could put our conveyors, shrink-wrapping machines and everything else," Rucker said. "It also has the ability to be expanded by up to 20,000 square feet if we keep growing."

Triad Commercial Properties, a commercial real estate firm that operates throughout the region, represented both parties in the deal, which closed for about \$1.8 million.

"South Atlantic is making a permanent commitment by buying this building," said Principal Tom Townes.

It's been a busy month for Triad Commercial, which changed offices itself. The firm now is leasing the second floor of the BDO Seidman building on Eastchester Drive in north High Point.

"We have 11 brokers, plus our property management team and some assistants," Towns said. "We had outgrown our space."

Triad Commercial also is taking an ownership stake in its new building, he added.

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