



Tribune-Review

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2016

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PRICE MAY VARY OUTSIDE
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WESTMORELAND EDITION

'AN IMPRESSIVE ACCOMPLISHMENT'



PHOTOS: DAN SPEICHER | TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Bob Pierno of Uniontown works to repair a customer's CPAP machine during the grand opening of Philips Respironics' East Huntingdon facility Tuesday.

INDUSTRIAL JUMP-START

Philips' East Huntingdon center is 1st business to open in Westmoreland Distribution Park

BY RENATTA SIGNORINI

An expansive warehouse bustled Tuesday as local leaders celebrated the grand opening of Philips Sleep & Respiratory Care's new distribution center.

"Nine months ago, this was a dirt pile," said Dave Butler, global operations and supply chain leader. "It was a barren piece of property. In nine short months, we went from a dirt pile with nothing on it to a fully operational, 260,000-square-foot facility."

Philips' \$2.6 million purchase was the Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corp.'s largest sale, one that director Jason

Rigone hopes will snowball into other development at the Westmoreland Distribution Park North in East Huntingdon and neighboring space off Technology Drive.

"It certainly is encouraging that a company like Philips has made the significant investment they have here," Rigone said.

The warehouse — it was fully operational around Thanksgiving — has enough space for Philips to consolidate functions at leased buildings elsewhere in Westmoreland County and maintain its staffing level of about 250 employees.

PHILIPS • A2



Brian Grundy, 33, of Greensburg wraps a pallet of equipment for shipping.

Perry eyed for Energy

Former Texas governor once wanted to eliminate that department

WIRE REPORTS

WASHINGTON — Rick Perry holds the Department of Energy in such low regard that in a presidential primary debate five years ago, he famously couldn't even remember it was on the list of federal agencies he wanted to eliminate.

Now President-elect Donald Trump appears to be on the verge of picking the former Texas governor to run the department that builds and maintains nuclear weapons, regulates fracking and offshore drilling and monitors the Iran nuclear deal, among its many responsibilities.

In Perry, Trump would have another oil industry ally and climate-change skeptic in his Cabinet. And like several other Trump choices so far, Perry is deeply skeptical of the department he would lead.

It was Perry's disdain for the Energy Department — or, rather, his inability to articulate it

PERRY • A2

**Nation & World
news, B8-9**

County expands air show offerings

Golden Knights parachute team, 2 WWII planes, VIP tent in lineup

BY JEFF HIMLER

Two warplanes dating from 1945 and the Army Golden Knights parachute team are among the high-flying acts that will support the Blue Angels Navy jet demonstration team at next year's air show at Arnold Palmer Regional Airport.

Those attending the Shop 'n Save Westmoreland County Air Show on June 24 and 25 in Unity will have the opportunity for the first time to reserve space in a VIP tent with shuttle service via golf cart to show displays.

"We've firmed up all the acts for the show,"

AIR SHOW • A5

Facility is '6 acres under a roof'

PHILIPS • FROM A1

Philips makes continuous positive airway pressure, or CPAP, equipment used in treatment of sleep apnea, a condition that causes people to temporarily stop breathing during sleep. Its product lines include ventilators, diagnostic and oxygen equipment.

Orange shelves lined with boxed products tower over employees in the warehouse area. Elsewhere, employees sit at computer terminals troubleshooting problems with products that customers mailed in. Workers have the capability to repair 382,000 devices annually at the new center.

Employees fill customer orders and prepare them for shipping there, with a capacity of 850,000 deliveries annually. On an average day, the center processes 3,500 shipments, Butler said.

The center was specially designed for Philips' needs and cost between \$4 million and \$6 million. Butler said the facility is "six acres under a roof."

"So when you look at it like that, it's an impressive accomplishment," he said.

Neil Apple, director of global service, came to the former Youngwood distribution center in 1999. Then, the distribution and service facility was about



DAN SPEICHER | TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Eric Ewing (left), second shift supervisor, talks to Sen. Pat Stefano during the grand opening of Philips' distribution center in East Huntingdon.

half the size of the East Huntingdon center. As the company grew, more space — and buildings — were needed.

Philips is back to the original consolidated plan established in 1999 to keep many functions in the same building, Apple said.

"Technology has changed, and this gives us an opportunity to better utilize technology to improve efficiency and best meet our customer demands," he said. "It's a tremendous job opportunity. This gives these people here the opportunity to see we're putting in an investment to keep them."

While Philips has cemented its relationship with the county, Rigone hopes others will follow suit. It is the first business to open in Westmoreland Distribution Park North, which became available in 2008. Two other sites remain available in that park.

The park is near RIDC Westmoreland, the former Sony plant, which is being retooled to house separate companies. The RIDC site has several tenants that employ about 700 people.

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