

BUSINESS

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CLARCOR AIR FILTER FACTORY

State-of-art process

Pittston Twp. firm will be the most automated filter maker for heating, ventilation and air conditioning in U.S.

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PITTSSTON TWP. — Had the new equipment arrived for the CLARCOR air filter factory, Tuesday's tour of the nearly 250,000-square-foot plant would have been canceled.

The state-of-the-art equipment is unique to the company's manufacturing process and for that reason off-limits to the public, said Norman E. Johnson, chairman, president and chief executive officer of the Nashville, Tenn.-based company.

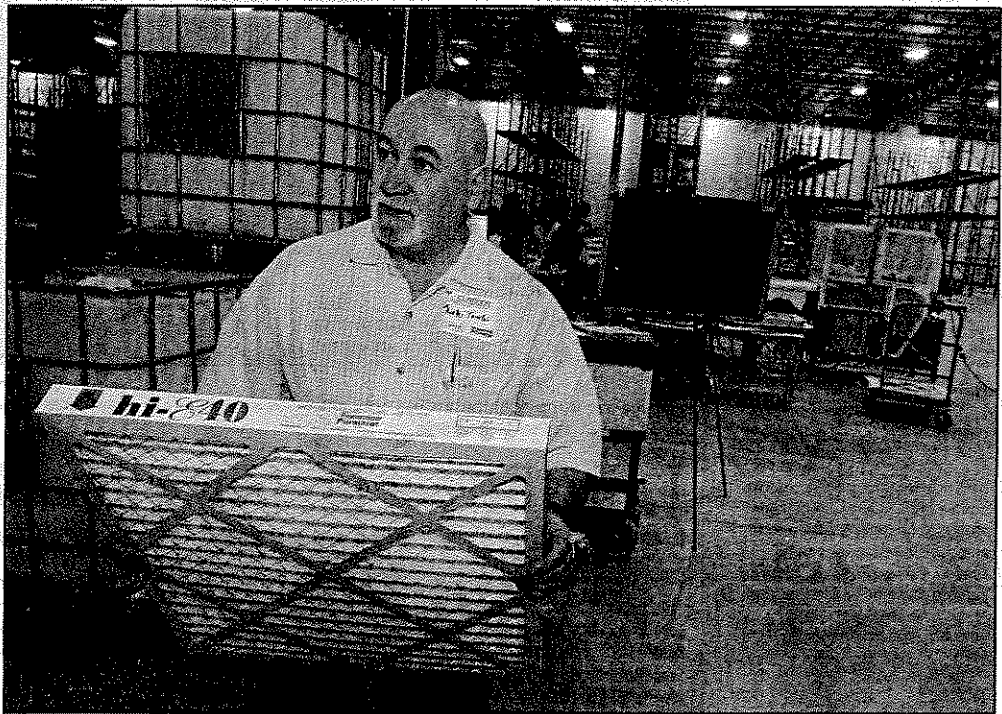
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To see more photos of the new CLARCOR plant, visit www.timesleader.com

When the gear does arrive and is operational, the factory in the Grimes Industrial Park will be the country's most-automated maker of filters for the heating, ventilation and air conditioning industry. The CLARCOR Air Filtration Products arm of the publicly traded CLARCOR Inc. is investing \$26 million to expand and automate its U.S. plants.

Although much of the local operation will be automated there will be a need for more than the 25 workers on the job now, Johnson said at a dedication of the factory. Up to 100 people will work there within six months.

"Starting a new factory is tough," Johnson told the initial group of hires.



PETE G. WILCOX/THE TIMES LEADER

Nick Tonti, manufacturing manager of the CLARCOR Air Filtration Products factory, handles one of the filters made at the plant in the Grimes Industrial Park, Pittston Township.

They'll be looked upon to set the tone and work pace. "We're really counting on all of you."

The workers have been training since the plant opened last month to make the filters used in office buildings, hospitals,

factories and residential buildings. They have been working at a few stations within the cavernous factory that is undergoing a makeover from its days as the Sathers candy distribution center. Their efforts filled cardboard boxes

stacked upon pallets lifted by forklifts to tiers of shelves in the distribution end of the operation.

The company chose the building in

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CLARCOR

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Northeastern Pennsylvania because of its location.

"We want to have this facility to serve the Northeast United States," Johnson said.

The demand for the company's products is strong. The key to continued growth will be making sure the company is "smart enough" to make the right products for the marketplace, Johnson said.

CLARCOR Air has manufacturing and distribution centers throughout the country and throughout the world. The Pittston Township operation is within a 250-to-300-mile radius of its northeast markets.

The company is committing \$4 million to the new plant and will receive more than \$1.6 million in state grants, loans and tax credits.

As a new corporate citizen eager to get off to a good start with the area, Johnson said, CLARCOR will make a \$10,000 donation to the YMCA of Pittston.