

BRICKS & mortar

BERKSHIRE DESIGN CENTER

Allegrone relocates to new Lenox HQ

BY JOHN TOWNES

In addition to completing its redevelopment of the Onota Building in downtown Pittsfield (see related story on page 1), Allegrone Companies recently marked another milestone in its corporate history.

This past summer, after five years of planning and construction, Allegrone Companies completed the move of its corporate headquarters from a site on Newell Street in Pittsfield to a new office complex has developed at 150 Pittsfield Rd. (Route 7/20) in Lenox.

The site is named the Berkshire Design Center (www.berkshiredesign-center.com).

In addition to housing the headquarters of Allegrone's own 75-member corporate staff, the 35,000-square-foot facility has space for about 15 other office suites to be occupied by tenants.

"We're all moved in here, and we're now recruiting other businesses as tenants," said Louis Allegrone, principal of Allegrone Companies.

Allegrone Companies is a family firm that originated as a masonry contractor in Pittsfield in 1921. It has since grown to become a major construction, development and real estate firm that serves a market in a radius of approximately 200 miles. It also has a branch office in Boston.

Its divisions include Allegrone Construction, which provides construction management, general contracting, design-build, and preconstruction planning services; Allegrone Home Builders, which partners with archi-

Over the past few years, Allegrone Companies has been gradually transforming a nondescript commercial building along Route 7/20 in Lenox into a cutting-edge office complex to house its own operations. The 35,000-square-foot facility also has space for a dozen or so business tenants.



itects, designers, and consultants on projects that include small renovation and restoration projects and large family estates; and Allegrone Masonry. It also has a real estate division that provides services related to commercial and residential development, project financing and brokerage services.

The company has become especially known for projects that include environmentally oriented new construction and adaptive re-use of existing sites and historic preservation. It frequently works on prominent projects and facilities for corporate clients, governments and nonprofit institutions and cultural organizations.

The Berkshire Design Center is intended to represent the values of social equity, conservation and green community, according to its promotional material.

It is designed to be a flexible, cost-effective facility to provide efficient office space with



the features, common services and amenities of a large corporate office for businesses of varying sizes. It is envisioned as an active business center that allows for interactions among tenants, and fosters opportunities

for networking and collaborations

It utilizes an open design with the flexibility to accommodate customized needs of tenant and differing sizes in its configuration. It can be tailored to provide spaces suitable for startups, very small businesses and independent freelance contractors.

"It offers suites that are small, with shared amenities and resources," said Allegrone.

Allegrone Companies purchased the property, which was in foreclosure, for \$900,000 in 2010. Originally, the structure had been built as a motel, known as the Edgewood. It was later converted into offices for a data-processing business. More recently it had housed a business known as the Leaning Center.

Allegrone Companies collaborated with local teams of architects, engineers, and local field contractors on the redevelopment of the site.

It did a complete renovation and expansion of the original 1960s-era building, to essentially create a completely new structure. The company also undertook extensive landscaping of the site, which is on a small hill overlooking Route 7/20 to the west.

To help finance the project, it received a \$3 million Recovery Zone Facility Bond from MassDevelopment. Voters in Lenox also approved a 10-year tax financing agreement.

Berkshire Design Center is oriented to a mix of tenants in professional services and creative industries, such as real estate, architectural, engineering and construction firms; financial services; technology; home design and furnishings, and fields such as visual arts, graphics and media.

The building includes a three-story glass atrium. An enclosed mezzanine space on the upper level is suitable for hosting private events and seminars. It also contains space that can be used to showcase products.

The second floor of the center includes an open kitchen and cafe area near the conference room. The area also serves as a common space for tenants to relax and network with other professionals in the building.

The site includes six acres of pervious outdoor greenspace with ecologically oriented landscaping to reduce the heat generated by the built sections, and protect water sources and drainage.

The structure was designed and constructed to adhere to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) guidelines of the U.S. Green Building Council.

The facility includes curtain-wall glazing to allow a flow of natural light to illuminate common spaces. Other energy saving measures include large windows, and LED lighting with occupancy sensors and timers. It utilizes air-sourced heat and cooling with constant fresh air recovery.

The site includes six acres of pervious outdoor greenspace with ecologically oriented landscaping to reduce the heat generated by the built sections, and protect water sources and drainage. The site is also prepared for the possible future installation of solar panels. ♦

Onota 74 Residences

continued from page 15

The apartments in the Onota include exposed rustic finishes such as raw wood and metal ornamentation, and architectural expressions of the mid-20th century.

With the Onota and Howard buildings completed, Allegrone said his company is turning its attention to another North Street commercial property it owns, the Stevenson Building, one block south of Onota 74.

"We're still working on the design and concept for that," he said. "But we like the idea of mixed use, and it will probably be along those lines."

He said they hope to begin that project next summer. "We'll also continue to look for buildings that are at the end of their life cycle, and are good candidates for redevelopment," he added.

Allegrone expressed confidence that Pittsfield is moving in the right direction.

"Pittsfield has come a long way in the last 10 years, and there's still room for growth," he said. "Our company is excited about completing the second phase of our effort with the opening of the Onota. Our hope is that these projects will help to spark continued development downtown, and other public-private partnerships in Pittsfield." ♦

eat on north

Holiday Party Planning Made Easy

Call or email Noel at 413-553-4109 or noel.henebury@hotelonnorth.com.

HOTEL ON NORTH

297 north street, pittsfield, ma
413 358 4741 hotelonnorth.com

ICC MC73444
US DOT 058227

Castine
moving & storage
since 1923

**SPECIALISTS IN RESIDENTIAL MOVING & WAREHOUSING.
LOCALLY & WORLDWIDE.**

Proudly serving The Berkshires for over 90 years.

QUALITY SERVICE • COMPETITIVE RATES
A Family Owned & Operated Business Since 1923

OR TOLL FREE
413.499.4982 1-800-225-8068
visit our website at www.castinemovers.com