

Workforce will double with Berco expansion

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A TRANSFER to a larger premises 20 miles along the road will help boost a company's turnover and lead to a doubling of its workforce.

Berco (UK), which manufactures and distributes tracks for crawler vehicles, is to move from Middlesbrough to part of the former Black and Decker factory in Spennymoor.

The 25-strong workforce will move into a 150,000sqft unit in the spring.

The company say the move – to a unit three times the size of its present premises – will allow for an expansion creating an extra 25 jobs during the next two years with more to follow.

Berco moved into the country in 2006, initially to distribute Italian-made tracks within the UK and earlier this year began assembling products at its Middlesbrough site.

Managing director Giovanni Micheletto said: "Since arriving in the UK, Berco has enjoyed enough success for us to plan our expansion, so we need larger premises capable of housing significant manufacturing operations.

"We are very happy to have been able to find those at Spennymoor with excellent transport links in an area where we believe we will be able to recruit locally in the coming years.

"We are tripling the size of our premises, so this will allow us to not only make initial expansion with the installation of a new assembly line, but also have room for further growth for years to come."

Berco, part of the ThyssenKrupp Group, will become the first tenant for the site after it was recently bought by Arlington, the Hartlepool-based financial services and property investment company.

In recent months Berco has added value for customers with product preparation and sub assembly.

This has seen it shift its market position from supplying components to a supplier of full systems.

The installation of a second assembly line will see the first phase of recruitment in 2008.

At the end of its last financial year, on September 30, Berco, whose main customers are Komatsu and JCB, had a £30m turnover.

The new facility, on the north side of Spennymoor's Green Lane Industrial Estate, was bought for £5m by Arlington.

Allan Cook, director of Arlington, said: "When we bought this 12.5-acre site, the first job was to find an anchor tenant to occupy the existing buildings.

"We have now done that and work has already started to prepare these premises for Berco to occupy in the spring.

"This is great news because, not only does it mean we have achieved our first goal, it also provides employment opportunities for people in Spennymoor and the surrounding area."

As well as refurbishing the existing buildings, Arlington plans to develop new units and landscape the site to provide quality industrial and office space.