

Berco move triggers recruitment drive

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A MANUFACTURER plans to move to one of the region's unemployment blackspots and treble its workforce of 25.

Berco UK, part of Thyssen- Krupp Group, which manufactures and distributes tracks for crawler vehicles, is moving to land previously owned by Black & Decker on the north side of the Green Lane Industrial Estate, in Sedgefield, County Durham.

It plans to move from its base in Middlesbrough to a larger, 150,000sq ft site, in Spennymoor - part of the Sedgefield Enterprise Centre - in spring next year.

As a result of the move, its floor space will triple and the expansion will create 25 jobs during the next two years, with the same number to follow later.

Berco UK agreed a deal for the site with Arlington, the Hartlepool based financial services and property investment specialist.

Berco moved to this country last year, initially to distribute Italian-made tracks, but earlier this year began to assemble the products at its Middlesbrough base.

Berco UK, whose main customers are Komatsu and JCB, plans to install a second assembly line in Sedgfield later next year, after which the first phase of recruiting staff will begin.

Giovanni Micheletto, managing director of Berco UK, 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, through Arlington, 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."

Allan Cook, director of Arlington, said: "When we bought what is a 12.5 acre site in Spennymoor, 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."

Spennymoor has been hit by a series of factory closures in recent years and last month another big employer, Electrolux, said it could pull out of the area following a review of operations.