

French Manufacturer Finds Lehigh Valley the ‘Ideal’ Location for Manufacturing Tiny Houses

By Paul Muschick

LEHIGH VALLEY - A French company that produces tiny houses for “glamping resorts” has selected the Lehigh Valley as the base of its U.S. operations.

Hekipia began exporting to the U.S. in 2019 and started looking for a location in the states to set up a manufacturing facility.

The company chose the Lehigh Valley because of its location near the Poconos and other resort areas in the Northeast, said Louis Dupont, Plant Manager Engineer for Hekipia America Inc. & Huttopia North America.

Hekipia is part of the Huttopia group, which owns glamping sites around the world, including six in the U.S. Three of them are in the Northeast – New York, New Hampshire, and Maine – and another is in Quebec.

Locating its manufacturing in the Lehigh Valley will allow Hekipia to produce tiny homes for those locations, Dupont said. The Lehigh Valley also is a convenient location near the port of New York for deliveries from France, he said. Another selling point is that the region is home to companies that Hekipia hopes it can partner with to supply materials such as windows, lumber, and roofing. “Eastern PA was ideal,” Dupont said.

The facility opened in April 2023 in Whitehall Township.

Hekipia is joining a growing number of international companies that are finding the Lehigh Valley to be an attractive location to do business.

In 2023, about 40% of the economic development prospects that reached out to Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp. (LVEDC) were from companies internati□

“Hekipia, an inventive, internationally owned company, has joined the ranks of many other international companies that see the strategic advantage of being located in the Lehigh Valley,” said Kristin Cahayla-Hoffman, Vice President of Business Development and Attraction at LVEDC.

“They are drawn to the region’s skilled workforce, access to one-third of U.S. consumers within a day’s drive, and nearby international airports and ports.”

The first tiny homes that will be produced by Hekipia in Whitehall will be 253 square feet. With two bedrooms, they sleep four people. The kitchen is equipped with appliances and there is a dining area. The shower and bathroom are located in separate rooms so they can be used simultaneously. The units are insulated for year-round use and have air conditioning and heat. They are built to the standards of the RV Industry Association (ANSI 119.5).

They are manufactured on trailers as Park Model RV and delivered fully equipped and can be set up on sites and connected to water and electricity in less than three hours. The goal



is to ramp up production in Whitehall to be able to produce several sizes and models.

Other international companies that recently located in the Lehigh Valley include Easy Signs, an Australian manufacturer of high-quality signage, which opened in Upper Macungie Township and recently was approved for a loan from the Pennsylvania Industrial Development Authority. The \$854,000 loan will be used to purchase equipment as Easy Signs ramps up operations.

Travaglini, a family-owned Italian company that designs equipment to cure meats and other delicacies, recently opened in Allentown. German-based Evonik, a leader in specialty gases, entered the Lehigh Valley after acquiring Air Products’ performance materials process and opened an Innovation Hub in 2022. Also in 2022, B. Braun Medical, which has been in the Lehigh Valley for decades and has its U.S. headquarters here, opened a 310,000-square-foot expansion and expanded its workforce to 2,000.

PMEA DISTRICT 10

INTERMEDIATE BAND & ORCHESTRA FEST



Friday, February 16, 2024

Where: Bangor Area High School Theatre
187 Five Points Richmond Rd.
Bangor, PA 18013

When: 7:00 p.m.

Admission: \$5

Featuring 200 band and orchestra students from 33 middle schools throughout Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, and Schuylkill counties!