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Association's expanded space to facilitate business activities

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Darlene J. Robbins said Thursday that the Northeast PA Manufacturers & Employers Association moved because it needed more room in order to help its members.

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Darlene J. Robbins said Thursday that the Northeast PA Manufacturers & Employers Association moved because it needed more room in order to help its members.

"We were housed in 738 square feet of office space," Robbins said during an open house at the association's new headquarters in Suite 250, One Norwegian Plaza, Pottsville.

Robbins, president of the association, hosted the gathering to showcase the group's new 3,200-square-foot headquarters to local business and civic leaders.

Although she said the association is leasing 625 square feet to Comcast Spotlight, Robbins said the group still has more than three times the room it did at its old office at 91 S. Progress Ave., and will put it to good use helping its more than 300 members in Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Northumberland and Schuylkill counties.

"We couldn't expand our services or our staff," she said. "We actually needed a building that was going to be conducive to our work flow."

Those services will include staging roundtable meetings, informing members of relevant legislative issues and regulatory requirements, and educating students about skills needed to succeed in the business world, she said.

Frank J. Zukas, president of the Schuylkill Economic Development Corp., said the work the association does produces great results for Schuylkill and surrounding counties.

"Economic development is as much an art as it is a science," Zukas said. "It's easy to sell a building. It's hard to sell a community."

The association develops relationships and trust, which helps attract companies to the area, Zukas said.

Martha Herron of PPL Electric Utilities Corp., a member of the association board of directors, said the new quarters should help the group serve its members better.

"We want to be quick, efficient and ... visionary," she said. "You can't have economic development without workforce development. You've got a real gem here. All I see is continued growth."

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