

CENTRAL PENN BUSINESS JOURNAL

September 28, 2018 • Vol. 34 • No. 35 • \$2

www.CPJ.com

CONSTRUCTION

Company to open design center, expand manufacturing

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Alex Bazdar is ready to rock the West Shore.

The 35-year-old CEO is bringing his East Shore company, Classic Rock Fabrication, to Mechanicsburg next month as part of a long-term expansion plan.

The stone countertop maker is opening a new design studio on Oct. 12 at 135 W. Allen St., the site of the former Eberly Lumber Co.

“There is a whole group of business out there that we just weren’t absorbing because we weren’t located 25 minutes west,” said Bazdar, who hopes to attract more business in fast-growing Cumberland County. His company is based in Lower Paxton Township.

The new 13,000-square-foot studio is expected to make it easier for homeowners, architects and builders to see how Classic Rock’s products could be incorporated into their designs.

The West Shore studio also will allow for an increase in production space at the company’s East Shore facility, which had about 11,000 square feet set aside to display materials for dealers and builders. That space will close, allowing Classic Rock to extend production throughout the 55,000-square-foot facility.

“Our business is in manufacturing,” Bazdar said. “If we can’t produce more, we’re stagnant.”

Steady growth

Classic Rock produces custom granite, quartz and solid surface countertops for home builders and commercial contractors. It sells them through a network of kitchen and bath dealers and remodelers, who work with retail customers.

Nearly two years ago, the 12-year-old company obtained



Classic Rock Fabrication, based in Lower Paxton Township, Dauphin County, is opening a design center in Mechanicsburg, as seen here. PHOTO/SUBMITTED

financing from the Harrisburg Regional Chamber and Capital Region Economic Development Corp. to purchase the Lower Paxton facility, which it had been leasing. That effort freed up cash that Classic Rock invested in a second facility in Cranberry Township, near Pittsburgh, opening up new opportunities in western Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia.

As the economy has grown and construction has boomed, the company has seen even wider demand for its products, Bazdar said. Classic Rock has shipped countertops to projects in Arizona, Illinois, Indiana, Nevada and Texas.

Bazdar said he hopes to continue growing into other states, and possibly add both new production and studio sites.

“At this point, we’re working almost every day in Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey,” Bazdar said.

He sees the Mechanicsburg studio as a springboard to future growth.

“If this is successful, we would like to do four more of them,” said Bazdar, who hopes to expand to the west.

Mimi Thorne, a cabinet sales and design manager at Mid South Building Supply, a Classic Rock dealer in Lower Allen Township, believes the retail-style Mechanicsburg studio will expose the wholesaler to more consumers. As a result, both dealers and Classic Rock should sell more products, particularly to people who might not cross the Susquehanna River.

“Some people still see the river as the great divide,” she said.

Mid South has already benefited from its relationship with Classic Rock. Before Thorne joined the Mid South four years ago, the company sold only laminate countertops.

Thorne had worked with Classic Rock through another builder and made the introduction when she started at Mid South. The company now sells granite and quartz and tries to make counters

part of every kitchen remodeling project it works on, she said.

“The new facility, I think, will benefit them greatly,” she said. “It’s going to be more of a show-place for the products.”

Classic Rock has built the Mechanicsburg studio using products it manufactures, Bazdar said, and the company intends for it to be more like an art gallery that highlights the versatility of its products. Corian, normally associated with kitchen counters, could be used for a ceiling.

“It’s not going to be for everyone,” Bazdar said. “We want people to dream and say, ‘We had no idea we could do this with the products. We want our office to look like this.’”

Classic Rock will staff the design studio with about four employees to start. Bazdar said that number could grow.

The company also is looking to add more employees on the production side. But like many companies, Bazdar said Classic Rock is finding it hard to fill openings for skilled workers, namely programmers and operators for its computer-controlled machines.

“We have lots of needs in Harrisburg to keep up with production demand,” Bazdar said.

Scott Appel is owner of Lower Paxton Township-based Touch of Color Flooring, which has retail locations on both sides of the river. He believes Classic Rock is making the right move if it wants to reach a larger audience.

Touch of Color opened on the Carlisle Pike in Hampden Township about three years ago. Foot traffic and revenue, he said, are stronger at the West Shore store than at his East Shore location in Lower Paxton Township.

“Cumberland County is booming,” he said.