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SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

Above, Donald Boyd at work on the conveyer line at Mahwah-based Hytorc's new distribution center in South Hackensack. At right, a Hytorc hydraulic tool that was being prepared for shipping. The company hopes the investment will spur growth.



New shipping center gives Bergen a lift

■ Leaders cheering Hytorc's decision to expand in the county

By **JOAN VERDON**
STAFF WRITER

Hytorc, a manufacturer of industrial bolting systems, has sent its tools and fasteners 1,792 feet above Manhattan to attach the spire of One World Trade Center, deep into the Gulf of Mexico to cap an oil leak, and even into orbit with the space shuttle. But when the company was looking for a new location for a distribution center, it chose South Hackensack.

Hytorc, whose headquarters are in Mahwah, on Wednesday officially opened its new automated distribution and shipping center at 100 Wesley St. The company is hoping the multimillion-dollar investment will spur growth and also be a reminder of its past and Hytorc's founder.

The 51,000-square-foot building is named the John K. Junkers International Distribution Center after the man who founded the company in 1968, and who died suddenly at age 78 last year before he could see his dream of a modern warehouse become operational. His three sons, Jason, 33, Eric, 32, and Tyson, 31, who now lead the company, said their father's vision to build an automated shipping facility will reap benefits for years to come.

"This positions us extremely well for our future," said Eric, president of Hytorc.

"Our father, no pun intended, left us with the tools we needed to grow the company," said Jason, chief operating officer.

The company hires independent machine shops to make tools that fasten nuts and bolts with the precise amounts of tension needed for critical uses in power plants, wind turbines, refineries, mining, military helicopters and steel construction.

Hytorc was born in Junkers' garage in Montclair. Its first New Jersey offices were in a South Hackensack building next door to the new distribution center. Hytorc still owns that building, and it houses its fasteners division.

Junkers' sons said their father loved South Hackensack because it was where he first built his business, and as a result, he chose the 100 Wesley

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site for the new facility. The building formerly housed a DHL shipping center. Junkers bought the building in 2012.

Bergen County and South Hackensack officials were cheering the company's decision to expand in the county at a ribbon-cutting ceremony Wednesday, saying it is refreshing to see a company make that decision when several major employers, including Hertz and Mercedes-Benz, have chosen to leave the county. The new facility will employ about 40 people, including 15 warehouse employees formerly in Mahwah. The company has about 120 workers combined in its Mahwah and South Hackensack locations, Jason Junkers said.

"We all heard the bad news," said Bergen County Clerk John S. Hogan, referring to lost jobs and departing companies. "Today, we hear the good news. We see a business that's not only staying in Bergen County but that's expanding in Bergen County."

The new facility replaces a warehouse and shipping center in Mahwah that was "very manual," Jason Junkers said, describing a warehouse where workers had to use forklifts to reach products stored on high shelves. "Guys

were spending hours sometimes searching all the shelves to find the right bin," he said.

The new distribution center uses an automated conveyor belt system installed by a Michigan-based company, Dematic, that also is used in Amazon distribution centers and other e-commerce warehouses. The system uses a series of shuttles and lifts that guide bins with products from the shelves to employees stationed along the conveyor belt who pick the products they need for a shipment. The shuttle system takes half the floor space to store products, because the space between shelves only has to be wide enough for a narrow conveyor belt and a plastic bin, instead of a forklift. That allows the company to keep more products in stock and ship items more quickly.

Hytorc and Dematic executives would not disclose how much the automated system cost to install, but those familiar with Dematic systems said this type of automated warehouse machinery typically costs in excess of \$3 million and can run as high as \$7 million.

Hytorc, a private company, does not disclose its sales. It has sales and service teams around the world in addition to its employees in Bergen County.



STEVE HOOKSTEIN/SPECIAL TO THE RECORD

Jason Junkers, chief operating officer at Hytorc, says his father's dream of a modern warehouse will yield benefits.

When the automated warehouse inventory system began running, "we discovered how much time we were wasting looking for products" in the old warehouse, Jason Junkers said. The new facility helps eliminate that wasted time, and "now we can focus on making sure everything is tested thoroughly and everything is packed properly," he said.

Bill Regan, a former mayor of South Hackensack and current

council member, said that in addition to making a significant financial investment in South Hackensack, Hytorc has created a building that beautifies an industrial zone. The remodeled distribution center was covered in white porcelain tile, and "when you drive along Route 80, you see this beautiful building that shines," Regan said.

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