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Con-way moving to Earhart

Freight company to be anchor tenant of vacant new building

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After considering several local sites, Con-way Freight has picked the Earhart Corporate Center near Plymouth Road and US-23 to be its new headquarters.

The locally based subsidiary of California's Con-way Inc. will consolidate its three Ann Arbor-area locations, including its Pittsfield Township headquarters on Venture Drive, as well as offices in Texas and California into the new building.

Con-way Freight President John Labrie said the company will take over 120,000 square feet of space to become Earhart's anchor tenant. Con-way will start construction in January and plans to move in by June. The Earhart center has been vacant since it was built.

"It was one of three (sites) in the greater Ann Arbor area that suited our needs and we liked the fact that it's not built out, it's just a shell now," Labrie said. "This will really allow us to streamline our administrative functions, allow us to streamline our strategy and simplify the way we do business with customers."

Con-way Freight specializes in less-than-truckload deliveries, which basically means the company loads trucks with freight from different companies and ships it around the country.

Con-way employs more than 300 people locally and will have more than 400 workers here by June, Labrie said. About 20 people have transferred here from the company's soon-to-be-shuttered Texas and California offices and Con-way has been adding additional workers here in anticipation of the headquarters move since September. The company employs 21,000 people across North America.

Labrie said Con-way will put signs on the building to be visible from US-23 and Plymouth Road.

Neal Warling of Bluestone Realty Advisors, who brokered the long-term lease deal on behalf of the building owner, Bloomfield Hills-based Kojaian Cos., said the 200,000-square foot building was completed in August 2006. The three-story facility has 650 underground parking spaces. Its lobby, rest rooms and first-floor corridor are built, but the rest of the structure is generally a shell.

Labrie said the headquarters' staff consists of executives, engineers, financial and human resource folks, its pricing team and sales division, among others. The company pursued tax abatements to help offset the cost of its move but didn't get any.

Labrie said Con-way's service center in Green Oak Township will not be affected by the headquarters move.

"By locating in Ann Arbor we are committing to this area and this community," Labrie said. "There is a great employee base here, because of the educated population ... and it's a good place to do business."

Con-way Inc. (NYSE:CNW) is a \$4.7 billion freight transportation and logistics company. It operates in 17 countries and employs more than 27,000 people.

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