

## **Pitney Bowes expanding to fit 100 more workers**

By Eugene Driscoll  
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NEWTOWN — One of the town's largest employers is expanding its building to make room for another 100 employees.

Pitney Bowes announced late last year it would stop the production of postage meter stamps at its factory in Stamford. The company is closing that factory and transferring 100 employees from Stamford to Newtown, where it has a distribution center on Edmond Road, south of Interstate 84. The move is part of a massive restructuring taking place in the Stamford-based manufacturer.

Pitney Bowes has two buildings on 42 acres of land in Newtown. To make room for the new employees, the company wants to reconfigure 21,400 square feet of space in one of its buildings and build another 125 parking spaces. "We're adding a mezzanine within the building and some parking spaces," said Scott Gerschwer, a Pitney Bowes spokesman.

The company's Newtown site has 320 employees. Another 120 employees are expected to be on site by June, bringing its total to 440. Pitney Bowes is the largest private employer in town and, with the added workers, is second only in manpower to the Newtown School District, which employs 714 people, according to 2002 statistics from the Newtown Community Development Office. The transferred employees will bump the company in front of the state Department of Corrections, which employs about 375 people at Garner prison.

The Newtown Police Commission is scheduled to talk about the project's potential traffic impact tonight. The company has yet to submit detailed construction plans for the town to review. Carol Mattegat, a member of the police commission, said her group will consider the company's traffic report and make suggestions. The extra office space will bring Pitney Bowes' holdings in Newtown to just under 395,000 square feet and add more traffic to Edmond Road, which ends at Church Hill Road near exit 10 of I-84. About 108 vehicles enter and leave the property every day in the afternoon. A traffic report prepared for the company states that the project will add another 41 cars to Edmond Road during the evening rush hour.

Elizabeth Stocker, director of the Newtown Office of Community Development, said the company is also asking the town to take ownership of Edmond Road, a private, two-lane road with industrial properties. The cars and trucks that go to the Pitney Bowes site use Edmond Road instead of nearby Schoolhouse Hill Road, which is lined with single-family houses, Stocker said. Taking ownership of the road means the town would be responsible for spending money to maintain it. The town hasn't decided what to do. "They want us to make improvements to it," Stocker said Monday. The Pitney Bowes proposal is also being reviewed by the state Department of Transportation.

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