

New facility quadruples WCS Logistics' freezer space

By **ONOFRIO CASTIGLIA**
The Winchester Star

WINCHESTER — WCS Logistics, formerly Winchester Cold Storage, hosted a ribbon-cutting on Thursday for a new, 63,000-square-foot facility in Frederick County, more than 100 years after the company's founding.

The Winchester-based business, which has operated as WCS Logistics since 2014, is a third-party logistics firm that temporarily stores large quantities of foreign and domestic food products before they are shipped to distribution outlets. It has about 40 employees, who help store everything from dry goods to frozen TV dinners to cottage cheese. WCS Logistics has three facilities in Winchester as well as locations in Berryville, Front Royal, and Charles Town, W.Va. The sites have a combined storage space of 1.7 million square feet.

The new building at 188 Brooke Road is the company's seventh facility. It was built over a two-year period at a cost of about \$9 million. Operations there officially started on Thursday with a Top of Virginia Regional Chamber ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Company President John Scully IV said the building quadruples WCS Logistics' freezer storage capacity.

"It will be more of a different kind of commerce," Scully said of the customers the new facility could attract, noting the company now has a greater capacity to store products in temperatures as cold as 20 degree below zero.

"The technology is exciting as well," Shane Brennan, CEO of the Cold Chain Federation in the United Kingdom, said about the building's ammonia refrigeration system, sensor-controlled LED lighting and air-tight insulation, which meet high-efficiency standards. "These investments are making it easier and cheaper to store our food and keep it safe."

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Brian K. Beazer, general manager and CEO of WCS Logistics, a temperature-controlled warehousing and distribution business, stands in the engine room of the cascading CO2 ammonia refrigeration system in the company's new 68,000-square-foot expansion on Brooke Road in Frederick County.

Space

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WCS Logistics, which turned 100 years old in 2017, is operated by a seven-member board with about 50 shareholders. The company, which started out storing apples, is part of World Food Logistics and the Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA), two international organizations based in the U.S. that oversee advancement in food logistics all over the world.

Cory Rosenbusch, president and CEO of the GCCA, said “it’s great to see capacity” expanding on the East Coast, where it’s needed. He said increasing demand for products kept in what the storage industry refers to as “the perimeter of the grocery store,” where fresh foods such as fruits, vegetables, dairy, meat, and fish are usually located, is growing

globally as consumers become more affluent and sophisticated. This drives the demand for safe cold storage, Rosenbusch said, and companies like WCS Logistics will have to invest and grow to meet the need.

Brian K. Beazer, WCS general manager and CEO, has “really put WCS on the map,” Rosenbusch said, taking it from a company that primarily stored apples to a diverse and modern enterprise.

“This new facility continues us down that path of being the best at what we do,” Beazer said, adding that about 10 additional employees may be needed within the company as the new facility becomes fully operational.

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