

Company invests \$10 million in hub

Showroom complex at old YMCA property to open in spring

BY PAT KIMBROUGH
ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

HIGH POINT — The coronavirus pandemic has not slowed a major construction project involving a downtown landmark.

Riverside Furniture's investment in its showroom complex and year-round product development hub on the site of the old YMCA on S. Main Street will amount to \$10 million when it opens this spring, according to President and CEO Fred Henjes.

"There will be additional invest-

ments as we go forward to build it out," Henjes said. "What we're going to start with is going to be really well done, but it will not be totally built out. We'll have some flexible space that we'll have the ability to adapt as we go forward."

The company, an importer of residential case goods furniture, is based in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

It has exhibited in the International Home Furnishings Center at High Point Market for about 35 years but decided to establish its own showroom in the old YMCA, which was most recently the law offices of attorney Joe Floyd.

It bought the 1925 building last year, is renovating its historic gymnasium, pool and other vintage architectural features, and is

building a major addition.

"We have Premarket toward the latter half of April. We will be showing and using the new facility at that time," Henjes said.

The oldest part of the YMCA is being preserved, while the portions that date from the 1950s onward were demolished.

The first two floors will be devoted to showroom space and are incorporating the original gymnasium and other vintage features.

On the back of the building, a two-story glass atrium addition is being constructed along Wrenn Street, which will include a new pedestrian entrance from the market district.

SEE **HUB/PAGE A2**



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Construction on Riverside Furniture's showroom complex and year-round product development hub is expected to finish this spring in time for Premarket in April. The company is investing \$10 million in the redevelopment of the old YMCA on S. Main Street.

HUB

FROM **PAGE A1**

The upper floors will feature a year-round hub, where customers — primarily furniture retailers — will visit to sample the company's products and where employees and suppliers will work on designs.

The company plans to staff six to eight of its merchandising employees in this "Collab Lab" year-round.

"The goal is, when we take possession of the building, we will occupy it 365 days a year, as a proprietary sales and marketing studio and lab," Henjes said. "Then, additionally, we will use it for a showroom at markets, and then also we'll use it to invite

major customers down in between markets. So it's kind of our goal to have a flexible arrangement there."

Also this spring, Riverside Furniture expects to open its \$5.4 million warehouse and distribution center in Caswell County. Henjes said the company completed its purchase of the 300,000-square-foot property on 50 acres earlier this month.

After renovations are finished, the facility will include inventory from the company's entire product line of bedroom, dining room, home office, home entertainment and occasional furniture to supply its customers throughout the Eastern U.S.

pkimbrough@hpenews.com |
336-888-3531
