

# THE MORNING CALL

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## BUSINESS

### **‘We’re here to stay’: B. Braun commits to Lehigh Valley as it unveils major expansion that will add 200 jobs**

By Evan Jones  
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It took a little over three years to build, but Jean-Claude Dubacher was all smiles Thursday as B. Braun unveiled a major expansion of its plant in Hanover Township, Lehigh County.

Dubacher, chair and CEO of B. Braun of America Inc., joined other company officials, along with local business and political leaders, for a tour of the \$200 million addition that adds 310,000 square feet to the medical and pharmaceutical device company’s facility in Lehigh Valley Industrial Park III near Lehigh Valley International Airport.

“It was a long process to get it done because we wanted to do it right,” Dubacher said. “You can easily build a plant just as a building and just do the minimum. But we wanted to make sure that it’s not only right for the patient, which means there’s the right quality, right compliance. We want to make sure that it’s right for our employees.

“All the things we implemented here, it was a long process to put all of that together, but today I’m really proud to open it and we’re going to fill it out,” he said.

Adding to the older 400,000-square-foot building, the addition gives the factory a U-shape and provides a seamless process in making the infusion therapy devices used to treat millions of patients.

The addition includes four sections for manufacturing and offices. Dubacher said it will be at full capacity by June as the equipment is delivered and assembled.

“You need to go through a protocol making sure that all the quality parameters are right,” Dubacher said. “They are medical devices that include complex, complex manufacturing.”

The manufacturing process includes:

- A room where plastic pellets are injected into a mold to form the parts. There will be 44 injection molding machines making 3 million components a day.

- The parts then go to the assembly room, where the machines will assemble 360 pieces per minute.
- Those are then taken across the hall by autonomous robots to a warehouse from where the products are shipped. These robots will travel up to 31 miles per day.
- Next to the warehouse is an extrusion room that will produce a mile's worth of tubing per minute.

When the addition is up and running, it will employ 200 more workers, bringing the plant's total to more than 1,700. Overall, B. Braun, which is headquartered in Bethlehem, has more than 2,000 workers in the Lehigh Valley. It came to the Valley in 1979 and has been at its Hanover location since 1985.

“We have a long history here of successfully manufacturing and we have grown over time since we have come here,” Dubacher said. “So just to go on with that tradition was one point, and the second one is the infrastructure here in the Lehigh Valley. When I say infrastructure, we have colleges, great universities. We have great community colleges. We have other manufacturing sites, where you come all together to create talent, build skills, and then benefit from that. It's the right place to be.”

There's also room for future expansion. Dubacher said the building is designed to be built outward without having to erect a new building.

“We'll need to fill this one up, but we're here to stay,” he said. That's music to the ears of Valley officials who helped take part in a ribbon cutting. “This company is unbelievable, and its track record has been good for the Valley,” said Tony Iannelli, president and CEO of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce.

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