

THE MORNING CALL

Pet food manufacturer to open first cold storage warehouse in Lehigh Valley



Freshpet plans to move into this cold storage warehouse in Bethlehem by the end of the year after work is completed by J.G. Petrucci Co. and BGO Cold Chain. (Courtesy of J Taylor Design)

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Freshpet is expanding its presence in the Lehigh Valley.

The pet food manufacturer is leasing a 216,000-square-foot cold storage building in Bethlehem, the company's first such facility, J.G. Petrucci Co. and BGO Cold Chain announced Tuesday. The building is at 757 Hellertown Road, near Interstate 78 in Lehigh Valley Industrial Park VII and is expected to be occupied by the end of the year.

"This new distribution center is an important step forward as we continue to grow alongside the families who count on us," said Nicki Baty, chief operating officer at Freshpet. "Located just minutes from our Bethlehem Kitchen, it gives us greater control over our operations and the scalability we need to keep pace with our growth, while positioning us to support Freshpet for years to come."

Freshpet, which uses fresh ingredients and is sold out of a refrigerator, has been in Hanover Township, Northampton County, since 2013, expanding its operations there in

2022. Headquartered in Bedminster, New Jersey, Freshpet has an additional facility in Ennis, Texas.

A Freshpet spokesperson said about 70 will work at the cold storage building. It will be a mix of employees between Freshpet and its logistics partner DHL. The company already has 675 workers in the Lehigh Valley.

In its latest quarterly earnings report, released last week, Freshpet said it had a 15.5% year-over-year rise in net sales to \$305.6 million. Net income was \$19.5 million, compared with \$16.4 million the year before.

The company raised its fiscal year 2026 outlook, expecting 10%-12% sales growth.

“Freshpet’s impressive growth continues right along with the renaissance of the Lehigh Valley,” said Don Cunningham, president and CEO of Lehigh Valley Economic Development Corp. “We are grateful for the commitment of Freshpet to continue expanding here and for the great partnership between Petrucci and Freshpet to continue to provide new and expanded facilities for growth like this new building in South Bethlehem.”

The project was developed through a joint venture between Petrucci and BGO Cold Chain. Construction was completed by Petrucci’s in-house construction management firm, Iron Hill Construction Management.

“Petrucci has been an exceptional partner, bringing specialist expertise and a shared commitment to quality and strong execution,” said Kevin Rivest, managing partner of BGO. “Freshpet’s lease of the entire facility underscores the growing demand for modern cold chain infrastructure in this market.”

The Lehigh Valley has been a manufacturing hub for pet food for years. ALPO has been produced in South Whitehall Township for decades and has roots to the 1930s. Spot & Tango has been operating in Upper Macungie Township since 2022 and recently announced a \$20 million expansion.