

# USSC Group moves into new building, ramps up hiring (Photos)

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COURTESY USSC GROUP

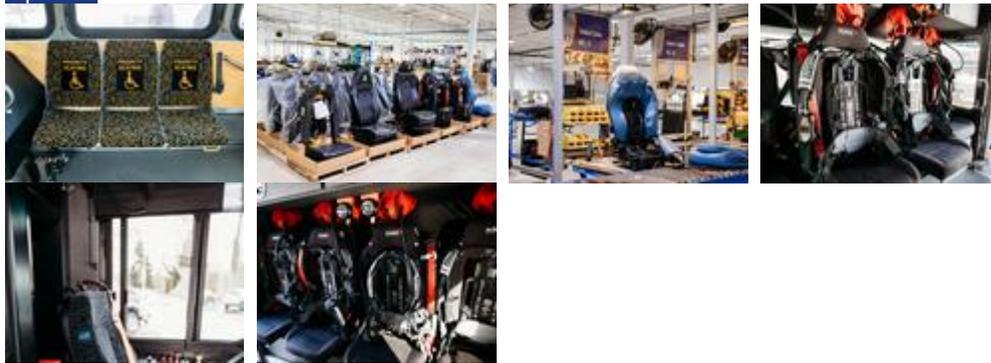
When USSC Group set out a couple of years ago to consider new locations for a major expansion, [Joseph F. Mirabile](#), its CEO, wasn't deterred from looking outside of Pennsylvania.

The Exton-based manufacturer of vehicle seats looked throughout the South and in New Jersey, where aggressive economic development officials were ready to provide ample incentives for USSC to make a move. Armed with nearly \$1 million in funding from Pennsylvania, USSC decided to stay and its search, though difficult at first, proved easier than expected.



## VIEW SLIDESHOW

9 photos



USSC Group is expanding in Exton and is now housed in a 325,000-square-foot building with... [more](#)

The roughly two-year search came to a close when USSC signed a 15-year lease with E. Kahn Development Corp. and Goodman Properties on 101 Gordon Drive in Exton, a 325,000-square-foot building directly across the street from USSC's former 130,000-square-foot building. "No matter where we looked, the loss of talent was not palatable for us," Mirabile said.

It also happened to be the only building in a 90-mile radius that was available. USSC moved two weeks ago into 101 Gordon, which sat vacant for the last four years after West Pharmaceutical Services Inc. relocated to Eagleview Corporate Center. As a result of its expansion, USSC is ramping up hiring. It has 300 employees in Exton, has 75 open positions and anticipates hiring a minimum of 140 people over the next two years.

The owners of 101 Gordon ripped out the old West office space and, though it saved a portion to serve as corporate offices for USSC, it fashioned the bulk of it into manufacturing space. This month, E. Kahn and Goodman will break ground on the second phase of development, which involves constructing another 200,000 square feet of manufacturing space scheduled to be completed by 2020. Both projects — the retrofitted West space and new building — cost \$30 million, said [Eli Kahn](#) of E. Kahn. The machinery in the new space was a \$13 million investment.

"This was putting down roots," Mirabile said. "This is a very significant commitment for us. With this facility, we feel it's Day One for the next phase of the company."

USSC has 60 percent of the North American market for mass transit seating including buses and trains, and is contracted by SEPTA. The company makes special seats for military vehicles, fire trucks and ambulances. It expects to record about \$130 million in sales this year.

Though a manufacturer, Mirabile looks at USSC as a technology company constantly trying to improve the safety of seats. For example, its seats are made to minimize blasts and delay shocks for military vehicles to thwart spinal injuries. It developed seats for long-haulers, such as truck and bus drivers. The seats are made with a special suspension system that absorbs bumps and vibrations that over time can lead to back and other injuries.

While passenger seating is its main line of business, Mirabile sees its Fogmaker product as a growth area. It's a fire suppression device that detects and extinguishes engine fires by emitting a pressurized mist. The product is installed in a variety of vehicles including school buses. The company wants to grow its market share in the industries it serves while creating new products to improve safety and comfort. It is also looking to expand into other sectors and has identified the aviation and aerospace industries as the next area it will delve into. "We like to be market leaders in all of the industries we go into," Mirabile said.

Formerly known as United States Seating Corp., USSC Group was formed in the mid-1980s by Christian Hammarskjold, a local entrepreneur. In 2015, the company sold a controlling interest for an undisclosed amount to Dubin Clark & Co., a Greenwich, Conn., private equity firm.

*Natalie Kostelni covers real estate and economic development.*