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BSI Corporate Benefits purchases the Victory Firehouse in South Bethlehem as their new headquarters

[Lehigh Valley, PA] March 13, 2023 - The Victory Firehouse, an iconic building situated in South Bethlehem, has a new owner, and will undergo a huge transformation in the next few months. Tony DaRe, CEO of BSI Corporate Benefits (BSI), announced this week that he and his business partners have purchased the Victory Firehouse, a building originally built in 1926 by the City of Bethlehem, to serve the citizens of the southside of Bethlehem. In 1941, Bethlehem Steel purchased the Victory Firehouse from the city and for the next 57 years, it served as Bethlehem Steel's #1 firehouse. As the fortunes of Bethlehem Steel declined, the building was sold in 1998 to a private investor. In 2006, Mike Gausling, founder of OraSure Technologies, purchased the building and chose to radically upgrade, reconfigure, and expand the building footprint while retaining an eclectic but powerful tribute to the history of the firehouse itself. On February 28th, the building was officially acquired by DaRe and his partners to serve as the new headquarters of BSI.

BSI, a nationally recognized independent employee benefits consulting firm, was founded in 2003 by DaRe. DaRe started BSI with the mission to serve clients and their insured members on a human and financial level. Today, BSI is one of the fastest growing companies at both a local and national level, with awards and accolades such as "*Best Benefits Consulting Firm*", "*Best Places to Work*", "*Best in Business*", "*Who's Who*", and "*Business of the Year*". BSI has an unmatched ability to serve clients at unprecedented levels from both a financial, educational and support standpoint. Last year they welcomed eight new members bringing the total employee count to 38, and by the end of this year they will have close to 50 employees.

For the past fifteen years BSI has been headquartered in the back of the Wiley Building (built in 1893) located on the corner of Market and Main Streets in downtown Bethlehem. With no room to expand in their current location, BSI wanted to find a new location to meet their growing needs. The Victory Firehouse proved to be exactly what they were looking for. When completed later this year, the estimated 5-million-dollar renovation, will house all 50 BSI employees with room to double in size to 100 employees in the coming years. DaRe credited the City of Bethlehem and Mayor Reynolds for the decision to keep BSI's headquarters in Bethlehem "*my family has deep ties to Bethlehem and the steel industry with my great grandfather and grandfather working a combined 80 years locally in the steel industry.*" DaRe cited the continued transformation of the south side of Bethlehem into the Lehigh Valley's premiere area for BSI employees to live, work, and play. DaRe and BSI employees have enjoyed being a part of the downtown community, "*Mayor Reynolds continued commitment to the business community and overall growth of the city was a key factor in our decision to stay in Bethlehem*". DaRe also praised Mike Gausling for having the vision and commitment to restore the firehouse originally in 2006 which launched the revitalization of everything the south side has become and is becoming today. "*Mike has been a friend and vital resource for me and for BSI for a number of years, we will be carrying on his vision and passion for the City of Bethlehem*".

In addition to managing the design, implementation and ongoing analysis of employee benefits for over 250 companies across the country, BSI represents and supports nearly 50 non-profit community-based organizations in the Greater Lehigh Valley and the building will serve as a unique space where community organizations will have an opportunity to spread their message and interact with business leaders. "*We are making this investment in our community as a commitment to being here long term. Over a dozen companies are participating in the renovation project, all Lehigh Valley based. At full capacity we will have 100 teammates fully integrated in the surrounding business landscape putting millions of dollars a year back into the local economy,*" said DaRe.

Fitzpatrick, Lentz, and Bubba LLC. handled the transaction for BSI and Peoples Security Bank and Trust provided the financial backing for the project. The renovation is expected to be completed by October 2023.