

25 Years Strong: Looking to the Future With Optimism

Benfield Electric and Elevator Supply elevator sales manager talks about what's new with the company and the state of the industry in NYC.

by Kaija Wilkinson



Sickler

Benfield Electric and Elevator Supply Corp.'s move from a series of red-brick warehouses in the Bronx to a new, 75,000-ft² central distribution center (CDC) in Mount Vernon, New York, came roughly six months before the COVID-19 pandemic hit NYC hard, with offices and restaurants shuttered and countless events canceled. Although, like all of us, Benfield felt – and continues to feel

– the impacts of the pandemic, the company is optimistic that NYC – which has been its lifeblood since it began in 1951 – will fully reopen and, in turn, drive new business. In three buildings at 240 Washington Street, the CDC boasts a wire-cutting machine that uses racked reels to facilitate instantaneous cut-to-length wire orders.

Benfield's elevator division came about 25 years ago, as a result of the acquisition of Central Elevator & Electrical Supply Co., Inc. Led by Bobby "Bobby Dee" DeFrancesco, the company carries all manner of supplies needed to keep vertical-transportation systems running smoothly – traveling cable, wire rope and door edges, to name a few. Benfield is the distributor of Prysmian/Draka cable in the NYC area, and that product remains its top seller.

Your author (**KW**) recently spoke with Benfield Elevator Sales Manager Paul Sickler (**PS**) about what's going on with the company.

KW: How has business been since relocating to the CDC?

PS: We moved in August 2019 to Mount Vernon (a stone's throw from the Bronx). Never in our wildest dreams could we

envision the pandemic and the turmoil that would be thrust upon us. We are slowly seeing the elevator business return to pre-pandemic levels. We need NYC to fully reopen, and we gain more confidence daily in that happening.

KW: How does the new location compare, size and capabilities-wise, to the former location(s)?

PS: We have consolidated five locations and five business units into the new CDC. The communications and efficiencies we are now experiencing allow us to better serve our customer base. In the past, we either emailed or called various personnel; now we are all physically together.

KW: Please provide details about the wire-cutting machine: manufacturer, capabilities, and what it enables Benfield to do for customers.

PS: We have a brand-new, state-of-the-art, fully mobile, automatic reeling, drum-racking, all-in-one cutting system manufactured by Autoreel Ltd. This enables us to instantaneously fulfill cut-to-length wire requirements. We have increased our inventory to ensure order satisfaction and address all customer needs.

KW: Approximately how many employees does Benfield have now?

PS: Between Benfield Electric Supply in the U.S. and our international operations, we have 118 team members.

KW: What effects has the pandemic had on business?

PS: The pandemic had a significant impact on business, which dropped dramatically. In the past six months, we have seen a nice increase as we wait for the "new normal" to truly happen. Where necessary, we adjusted to make sure our company remained financially strong and prepared for the



Sickler operates the wire-cutting machine.

