

Unitex industrial laundry marks 10 years at Mount Vernon site



Unitex marks 10 years of laundry in Mount Vernon: Unitex in Mount Vernon celebrated 10 years at its current location on March 14, 2013. Video by Ernie Garcia, The Journal New/lohud.com



Written by
Ernie Garcia

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MOUNT VERNON — If Westchester Medical Center needs clean sheets, an ordinary laundry can't handle the load.

That's why dirty laundry has kept Unitex in business for 98 years.

On Thursday, the health care uniform and linen rental company celebrated 10 years since its relocation from the Kingsbridge section of the Bronx, while Unitex officials described new investments to keep the wash cycles spinning.

"Over 1,500 people from around the world have been here to see what you have all put together and we all should be very proud," owner Michael Potack said during a ceremony recognizing longtime workers.



Unitex employee Damaris Jimenez, of the Bronx, loads a folding machine Thursday at the Unitex industrial laundry in Mount Vernon. / Ernie Gracia/The Journal News

Potack, 68, of Scarsdale, said automation at his 53,000-square-foot linen laundry at 401 S. MacQuesten Parkway has drawn industrial laundry professionals.

Huge conveyors haul laundry around the plant, while workers feed about 950,000 pounds of linens into huge folding and ironing machines each week.

Technology also helps Unitex reduce its environmental footprint.

A computerized heat-transfer system warms incoming 40-degree water to 87 degrees with outgoing wastewater from the finished wash cycles.

Unitex's clients include White Plains Hospital and the company has about 1,500 employees at 11 plants in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

About 210 unionized employees work in the MacQuesten Parkway laundry represented by the Service Employees International Union, with average hourly wages of about \$14 for drivers and about \$11 for laundry line workers, plus benefits.

Unitex's latest investment is a \$400,000 mobile generator that the company expects to receive later this month.

The 1,000-kilowatt machine is partially a response to Superstorm Sandy, which disabled two of Unitex's plants in New Jersey, said Potack.