

Finger Lakes Business Services expands HQ

Adds Watertown location in acquisition

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AUBURN — Finger Lakes Business Services Inc. (FLBS), a firm that operates its answering services for businesses, has expanded its headquarters in Auburn, moving into a space a neighboring tenant had vacated.

FLBS also acquired the telephone-answering service operations from Watertown-based S.T.A.T. Communications Inc. and has launched an answering-service call center in Watertown.

The company made both announcements in separate news releases issued in mid-July.

FLBS, headquartered at 42 Westlake Ave. in Auburn, offers answering service, call center, message center, and paging-center services.

FLBS has had “organic growth that results in just the need to have ... a few more operator stations, a few more administrative staff,” says Gardner McLean, company president. McLean spoke with CNYBJ on Aug. 6.

McLean is the firm’s majority owner, while Ray Schremp, company vice president of operations, is the minority owner, according to McLean. He declined to disclose each man’s specific percentage of ownership.

The company now operates in a 4,000-square-foot space, having added 1,000 square feet with the expansion, he says.

A physical-therapy office moved to a larger facility, creating in the vacancy, according to McLean.

Active Physical Therapy Solutions moved to a new building at 91 Columbus St., according to a December 2014 newsletter posted on its website. The company also confirmed FLBS moved into its space, following an email inquiry from CNYBJ.

A contractor “gutted” the walls and created a new, larger space for our answering-service staff, which FLBS refers to as “agents,” according to McLean.

The work in Auburn enabled FLBS to expand from 11 agent stations to 21, “so we also doubled the agent staff” and constructed four offices, including one that’s used as a conference room, he says.

FLBS and WST33, LLC, which owns the building, handled the renovation cost, which



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Employees of Finger Lakes Business Services (FLBS) answer calls at their stations. FLBS has added 1,000 square feet of space in its Auburn headquarters following the departure of a neighboring tenant. The company also acquired the answering-service operations of S.T.A.T. Communications Inc. in Watertown.

totaled about \$90,000.

Fritz Construction of Auburn completed the renovation work, McLean notes. The renovation work started in January and the company has finished “most” of the project.

“The operational side of the business [has] been in there for a couple months now,” says McLean.

FLBS will also move an administrative employee into the renovated space within a month, he added.

Watertown acquisition

FLBS closed on its purchase of the answering-service portion of S.T.A.T. Communications Inc. on Sept. 25, 2014.

“We ... jointly operated it until ... late May, which was when we converted everything over to our computer system,” he says.

McLean declined to disclose the acquisition cost.

S.T.A.T. listed [the] service for sale with Trout Creek, Montana-based TAS Marketing Inc., a broker that specializes in answering services that are up for sale and one with which McLean has a “connection.”

“So the broker contacted me, asking if I

was interested,” he adds.

AnswerWatertown started operations under AnswerUSA on Oct. 1, 2014, even though the staff and management were mixed at that time.

“We started building the customers and marketing under that name,” McLean says.

FLBS first launched its AnswerUSA Group division in 2010, he adds.

FLBS is renting an 850-square-foot space at 44 Public Square in Watertown, where eight of the company’s 70 employees work.

“We chose that because it’s directly above the S.T.A.T. offices and made for an easier process of migrating customers to our system,” McLean says.

The firm is looking for a new space “preferably” in downtown Watertown, he adds.

The Watertown location represents the 11th operation that FLBS has acquired.

It has previously purchased New York operations in Auburn, Ithaca, Syracuse, Oswego, and Rome.

FLBS also acquired out-of-state operations in Brandon, Florida; and Steamboat Springs, Greeley, and Hotchkiss in Colorado, according to its news release. ■