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## CAN TOWNS PREVENT DIOCESE'S MOVE?

As closing date on land deal approaches, leaders from Joliet and Crest Hill hope to keep Diocese of Joliet where it's at

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## NEW LENOX SAYS NO TO VIDEO GAMBLING

Village board votes 3-2 against plan, with members saying they do not trust how the state is regulating the machines

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## G&W ELECTRIC MOVES TO BOLINGBROOK RE-ENERGIZED



After a long search for a new home, international company leaves Blue Island for much bigger headquarters and manufacturing plant in Bolingbrook

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Bolingbrook Mayor Roger Claar (center) welcomes John Mueller (with microphone), chairman of the board and owner of G&W Electric, and others to Tuesday's dedication ceremony for the new G&W Electric headquarters in Bolingbrook. | JOSEPH P. MEIER-SUN-TIMES MEDIA

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# G&W Electric moves HQ to Bolingbrook

## Leaders say they have been looking for new home that would allow them to expand and flourish

BY CINDY WOJDYLA CAIN

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**BOLINGBROOK** — Lee Valent cried on the first day of work in her company's new building.

They were tears of joy for the receptionist from Lansing who had toiled for years along with other G&W Electric workers in an antiquated, overcrowded building in Blue Island.

At a ribbon cutting on Tuesday morning, local officials and business people got to see what made Valent so emotional. The 377,000-square-foot global headquarters and manufacturing plant is modern, high-tech and temperature- and humidity-controlled. It's triple the size of the old building.

Valent is thrilled to be in G&W's new home, where her reception area is many times bigger.

"She thinks she's in a country club," joked John Mueller, G&W's chairman of the board and owner.

### 'We are in Illinois'

G&W made the move earlier this year from Blue Island to Bolingbrook after years of searching for a new home where the company could expand and flourish. For a while, it looked like neighboring states would steal the international company away from Illinois.

But that didn't happen because Mueller said G&W would have lost too many good employees.

"We are not in Indiana. We are not in Michigan. We are in Illinois," said a jubilant Ken McConnaughay, chairman of the Bolingbrook Chamber of Commerce's board at Tuesday's ceremony.

G&W retained most of its existing workers and added 30 local hires to its local staff of 400. Another 200

work at the company's international locations in Canada, China, Mexico, Macedonia and soon Brazil.

In 1977, Mueller's dad and a partner rescued the failing electric company, which was founded in 1905. The company has grown 285 percent since 2002. The company's largest client is Southern California Edison, which orders \$18 million in electrical switches every year. G&W also will be providing equipment for ComEd's power grid update for the next five years.

G&W Electric makes electrical fuses, switch gear and circuit breakers that are used in 100 countries and every continent in the world, including Antarctica. The equipment is used for shopping malls, subdivisions, utility companies and high-tech data centers.

### Emotional experience

Mueller credited Bolingbrook Mayor Roger Claar and John Greuling, president and CEO of the Will County Center for Economic Development, for helping to pave the way for the company's move to Will County. (The company's brass and aluminum foundry remains in Blue Island.)

ComEd also helped with the move by extending a bigger power distribution line to the building, Claar said. G&W needs a lot more power for its manufacturing plant than the building used when it was a warehouse for Beanie Babies, he added.

Mueller said the state's Edge Tax Credits and the federal Recovery Zone Bonds also helped the privately held company buy and renovate the building.

U.S. Rep. Judy Biggert, R-Hinsdale, said the company is remarkable because it has had



**John Mueller (right), chairman of the board and owner of G&W Electric, and Bolingbrook Mayor Roger Claar share a laugh before Tuesday's dedication ceremony for the new company headquarters and manufacturing plant in Bolingbrook.** | PHOTOS BY JOSEPH P. MEIER-SUN-TIMES MEDIA

tremendous success "in a very, very difficult economy" and she said she hoped G&W could bring a "jolt" to the local economy.

But for employees like Valent, G&W is a great place to work that just got better.

"When I walked in here that first day, I just looked at the atrium and it was emotional," she said. "It's just amazing."



**Tim Foley, vice president of sales and marketing for G&W Electric, points out a finished recloser during a tour of the manufacturing floor at the new Bolingbrook plant.**



**Mueller applauds U.S. Rep. Judy Biggert, R-Hinsdale, during Tuesday's ceremony.**