



Colonial Airstream & RV

By David Hopkins



Colonial Airstream & RV is a family owned and operated, #1 rated New Jersey motor home dealer, frequent recipient of Winnebago’s “Circle of Excellence” award, top consumer rated Five Rivet Airstream company and Airstream’s top single-location dealer for 9 out of the last 10 years. Colonial Airstream & RV is also one of Penn Valley Constructors’ newest “Partners in Excellence”.

Brothers Jim & John Lenzo were raised in Staten Island, New York. In 1977 they moved to the Garden State fresh out of college. The two brothers gained valuable experience in the automobile industry and in 1982 partnered up to run automobiles to wholesale auction. They continued with this operation until 1995 when they launched their first automobile dealership in Lakewood, New Jersey.

Initially the brothers were specializing in high-end, late model cars and trucks before Recreational Vehicles (RV’s) joined their product line in 2002. Specializing first in Airstream model RV’s,

Winnebago was added to the mix in 2005.

Business was good and allowed the Lenzo’s to grow and expand. Initially they started with just a handful of employees and are now employing over fifty. Their success quickly led them to outgrow their first building. Over the course of time, they accumulated three more locations scattered throughout Lakewood, New Jersey. While the additional locations allowed them the space required for their operations, there were four separate lots spread throughout Lakewood that did not allow them to operate as efficiently as desired. In order to build their dream dealership, they needed land and lots of it. Their goal was to consolidate all their operations into one new location. The Lenzos began to scour New Jersey for land for their new home.

The Lenzo brothers had been looking for several years and eventually acquired three adjacent properties located about four miles from the New Jersey turnpike in Millstone Township, New Jersey. The properties are located on Route 33 between Hightstown and Freehold. This



Groundbreaking June 15th, 2018
From left: John DenBleyker, John Lenzo,
Jim Lenzo, Jon Otto & John Redfield

is virtually equidistant from New York and Philadelphia, and yet was located out in the “country”. It was now time to design and build their new dealership.

How did Penn Valley enter the picture?

Right around the time the Lenzo brothers started selling RV’s back in 2002, they were approached by former Penn Valley Constructors Vice-President, Peter Grover (who retired in late 2017) and his wife Star. Both are Airstream enthusiasts who were on an RV vacation. Peter introduced himself to the Lenzo’s and a lasting friendship was formed. Peter left the Lenzos his business card, a Penn Valley newsletter and a great impression as well.

So good, in fact, that Jim and John still have Peter’s business card and newsletter in their possession to this day! Fast forward to 2015 when the Lenzo brothers had started preliminary

Jon told Peter “These are the kind of people we want to do business with!”

The Penn Valley team worked hard to make that happen, taking a big part in helping finish the structural elements of the building.

It was a challenging project from a design and constructability standpoint. The showroom included multiple roof lines. Long clear span construction was needed to display large motor homes in the showroom. Jim and John wanted the interior to have a rustic, outdoor feel. Peter engaged his old friend, and fellow Airstream enthusiast, Rebecca Larys to layout the interior elements. Rebecca used her interior design talents to help with space/layout design, interior finish specifications and furniture selections. The end results are spectacular. The

building captured the Lenzo’s original intent and then some.



planning for their new location. They had hired an architect before reaching out to Penn Valley. In December of 2015 Peter took his partner, Jon Otto, President of Penn Valley Constructors, to meet the Lenzo’s in Lakewood, New Jersey. On the ride back to the Penn Valley office,

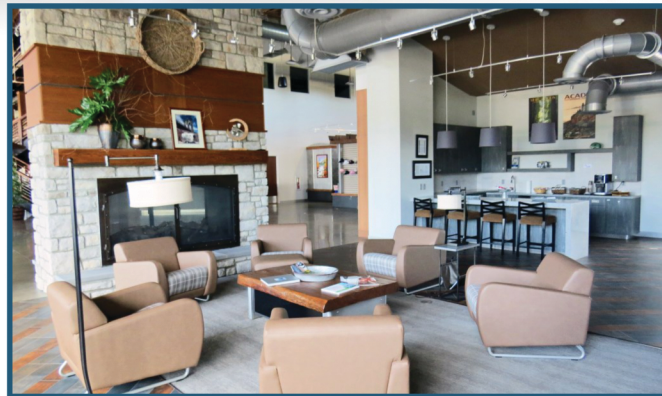
After the project design and permitting was completed, construction started in the summer of 2018. Project Manager John Redfield got the project started by overseeing the initial steps of construction: site work, footings, foundations, above grade block, structural steel erection and roofing.





At this point, Senior Project Manager and Vice-President John DenBleyker took the reigns and oversaw the remainder of the construction including framing, exterior finishes, MEP's, insulation, drywall and all interior finishes. Superintendent Brian Daniels was our man on-site and was instrumental in overseeing all construction activities and interfacing with the Lenzos and Township Officials as required.

After a lengthy permit process with a very cooperative Millstone Township and minor building delays out of everyone's control, construction was complete early 2020.





The end result is a beautiful eight to ten RV unit indoor showroom with an extensive twenty bay, 18,000 square foot service department. The showroom, service department and parts storage area are now located under one roof on a site that is approximately 12.5 acres in size.

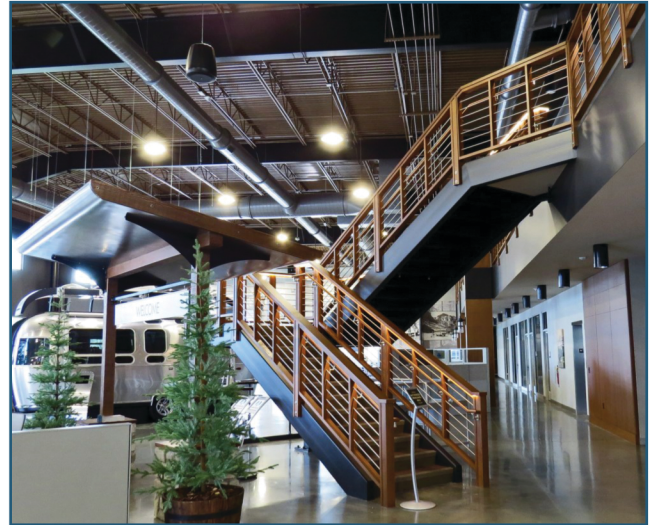
A Certificate of Occupancy was obtained on February 2, 2020—the day Colonial was set to move in. As luck would have it, we were able to finish right before the pandemic-related shutdowns that took place in New Jersey and elsewhere throughout the country.

“Our timing when we moved in was just about perfect.” John said when interviewed for RVBusiness Magazine. “Unfortunately, of course, we couldn’t let people into our brand new building for a time, but we dealt with it. Bottom line, we consider ourselves fortunate that we’re here and we’re not in our old facility and still looking to try to build it.”

“In the big picture, the timing was actually good,” continued John, “if our timing was off a little bit, maybe a few months, we wouldn’t have been able to complete the building”.

Thankfully, business has been booming as restrictions have been eased in New Jersey. Penn Valley is proud to have helped the Lenzo’s realize their dream facility and to have them as one of our newest “Partners in Excellence”.

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