



## By the numbers: Mercedes-Benz will save big with move from Bergen to Atlanta

Mercedes Benz

A sign is seen in front of one of the sprawling buildings at the U.S. headquarters for Mercedes-Benz on Mercedes Drive Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2014, in Montvale, N.J. (AP Photo/Mel Evans) *(Mel Evans)*

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**MONTVALE** — The lure of **lower taxes**, a cheaper cost of living, more access to critical transportation networks, key manufacturing plants and about \$50 million in incentives has sealed it — German automaker Mercedes-Benz is departing Bergen County for Atlanta. And with it, **potentially close to 1,000 jobs**.

In an interview with NJ Advance Media following the announcement, Mercedes-Benz CEO Stephen Cannon, a Wyckoff native, said Atlanta won out because of the high quality of life, proximity to universities like the Georgia Institute of Technology and the business climate.

He said Governor Chris Christie's administration urged Mercedes-Benz to stay.

"He's a business oriented governor so it was a pretty positive dialogue, even though it wasn't easy," Cannon said.

Let's take a look at the key numbers behind the move:

**1,000.** That's roughly how many people worked at Mercedes-Benz's U.S. headquarters in Montvale. The company said "several operational areas" will remain in Montvale and Robbinsville, N.J. though how many full-time workers will remain in New Jersey was not revealed. Non-exempt employees like secretarial and support staff will be likely be left behind during the move, while a chunk of employees in Montvale will likely relocate to Atlanta, according to John Boyd, a corporate site specialist at Princeton-based The Boyd Company.

**2017.** Mercedes plans to build a permanent headquarters north of Atlanta by early 2017. Employees are to begin moving in July. A temporary facility will be rented until the headquarters is constructed, the company announced. Divisions like IT, service engineering and customer assistance won't move until the permanent headquarters is finished.

**20.** Mercedes will be realizing a massive savings by moving to Fulton County. Boyd estimated that Mercedes will cut operations cost north of 20 percent with the move. The savings come largely in the form of lower costs in labor, property taxes, energy, construction -- and it's in the tens of millions. Multiple news outlets have reported that the incentive package in Georgia is worth as much as \$50 million.

**\$916,700.** Mercedes-Benz paid \$916,700 in property taxes last year on its sprawling 37-acre campus in Montvale. The high property taxes in New Jersey aren't just a problem for residential homeowners -- corporations are looking for relief on their quarterly bills, too. In Georgia, the company will likely receive abatements though details have not yet been made public.

**3.** Mercedes-Benz's pending departure represents the third major relocation from Bergen County in the last few years. Hertz announced in 2013 would be shipping off 550 jobs from Park Ridge to sunny Florida. Then, last year, Sealed Air said it would be relocating 200 jobs from Elmwood Park to Charlotte, N.C. Mercedes had also been courted by two cities in North Carolina before

ultimately selecting Atlanta, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

**207.** Nearly 1,000 flights originate out of 207 gates in Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport each day, making it the busiest airport in the United States. Frequent direct flights to Frankfurt, near the company's global headquarters in Stuttgart, are no doubt a big part of the appeal. Quick access to the shipping port in Brunswick, G.A. and the manufacturing plant in Alabama were also key factors in leaving New Jersey.

**1998.** This isn't the first time Mercedes threatened to leave the Garden State. In 1998, Mercedes tossed around the idea of relocating to nearby Rockland County in New York, but instead opted to renovate the three-building campus in Montvale at a cost of \$8 million. This time, they've largely made good on the threat.

**300.** As in, 300 Chestnut Ridge Road in Woodcliff Lake, the corporate office address of BMW North America. About 1,000 employees work in the Woodcliff Lake headquarters. But with a manufacturing plant already in Spartanburg, S.C. and the trend toward southeast auto dominance, how long will BMW stay in Bergen County? A corporate spokesman did not return messages Tuesday.

*Myles Ma contributed to this report.*

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