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Lencore Acoustics Corp.

**LOCATION**

Merrick, N.Y.

**PRODUCT**

MICORE® Brand Mineral Fiber Board

**"MICORE® Board is a superior product versus other similar products such as particle board. It is non-moisture absorbent, does not sag or 'weep', is tackable for meeting room walls, is Class A fire rated for flame test and is consistent and reliable, shipment after shipment"**

Jonathan Leonard  
Vice President  
Lencore Acoustics Corp.

## The Future Sounds Bright For Lencore: Open-Office Designs, New Medical Privacy Legislation Fueling Growth

It's hard to mask the excitement at Merrick, New York-based Lencore Acoustics Corp. The acoustical control company, founded more than a dozen years ago, has been the beneficiary of several recent trends and laws, all of which deem that office and public sounds be reduced by using acoustical masking designs, systems and products.

During the past decade, the open-office design concept originally launched in the 1970s has truly exploded. This explosion, however, has caused some not-so-pleasant side effects; among them, worker complaints of lack of speech privacy and noise in or around their work spaces. These noises can originate from copiers, overhead ductwork, nearby mechanical rooms, elevators or even inconsiderate colleagues.

The importance of office acoustics has thus become a critical issue. As trends continue to push traditional enclosed private offices out into the open plan as workstations, the issue of sound and the ability to control it has become paramount. The ability to concentrate is a key benefit that all employees must have if companies are to remain productive and operate at optimum levels.

A recent report by The International Facility Management Association (IFMA) shows that more than 80 percent of respondents currently use open-plan/panel systems in their space planning. The extensive use of workstations in corporate America has spurred system furniture manufacturers to stay abreast of important trends that affect the open plan. Whether addressing the ergonomics of a workstation, creating a better wire management system for electric and cabling flexibility or providing acoustical comfort, manufacturers and their dealer distributors must provide answers to the problems their clients face.

Sound masking introduces an unobtrusive, ambient background sound into the office environment that renders speech unintelligible while reducing interference from distracting office sounds. It provides a random sound that does not carry information, is completely unobtrusive, non-directional and harmoniously uniform.

Masking sounds are set one or two decibels above conversational speech, which allows conversations to take place without disturbing others. This increases productivity and worker morale, all the while creating vital speech privacy.



Jonathan Leonard, Vice President of Lencore Acoustics Corp., has watched the company grow tremendously in the past few years.



### A Material Difference

Another important component to controlling noise is choosing the right material for wall panels, dividers and baffles. MICORE® Brand Mineral Fiber Board from the Industrial Products Division of United States Gypsum Company has been the material of choice for Lencore since

Jodi Jacobs, Lencore's director of Marketing works closely with Leonard on many projects..

1990.

"MICORE® Board is a superior product versus other similar products such as particle board," says Jonathan Leonard, vice president of Lencore. "It is non-moisture absorbent, does not sag or 'weep,' is tackable for meeting room walls, is Class A fire rated for flame test and is consistent and reliable, shipment after shipment."

Lencore uses MICORE board for virtually all of its high-profile installations where acoustics and aesthetics are of equal importance. "It has all the critical properties we need to match form and function," adds Leonard. In fact, Lencore has installed more than 100 million square feet of sound solutions nationwide since its founding.

## HIPAA, Oral Privacy and Lencore

A recently passed piece of legislation is prompting Lencore's phone to ring more loudly, as well. The Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) was enacted to provide health care coverage continuity, ensure greater accountability and simplify administrative functions within the health care industry. HIPAA's objectives also include extensive new requirements for privacy standards covering the transmission of health information in electronic, paper and oral forms.

Under Section 164.502 of the Federal Register's Department of Health and Human Services final ruling on Standards for Privacy of Individually Identifiable Health Information, it states that: "*Protected Health Information includes individually identifiable information in any form, **including information that is transmitted ORALLY**, or in written or electronic form. This Privacy Ruling requires that covered health care entities make reasonable efforts to limit the use or disclosure of protected health information to the minimum necessary.*" Facilities included under the provisions of HIPAA include:

- **Pharmacies**
- **Physician's Offices**
- **Medical Clinics**
- **Public Health Authorities**
- **Life Insurers • Billing Agencies**
- **Information System Vendors**
- **Service Organizations**
- **Hospitals**
- **Military Medical Bases**
- **Employers**



MICORE Mineral Fiber Board combines outstanding acoustics and aesthetics in all types of applications.

As defined by American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards, speech privacy is achieved when the measured Articulation Index (AI) is less than .20 feet. The Annual Book of ASTM Standards defines Articulation Index as "a computational method for predicting the intelligibility of speech for talkers and listeners. The Articulation Index is a weighted fraction representing, for a given speech frequency band and noise condition, the effective proportion of the standard speech signal that is available at the listener's ear for conveying speech intelligibility."

When designing facilities, it is important to consider the level of background sound within the environment. Without the appropriate levels of background sound masking, conversations can be easily understood. In health care, many transactions involving the



At the Westin New York Hotel in Times Square, MICORE board is installed in conference rooms and other areas, enhancing acoustics and providing a colorful accent.

discussion of personal health information take place at pharmacy counters, reception areas, admission desks, nurses' stations, consultation areas, physician offices and waiting rooms.

To protect the privacy of these conversations, background sound masking can be introduced to render speech unintelligible and thus provide an acceptable level of oral privacy.

"We are pleased that our services, knowledge and products are meeting the specific needs of our many customers," says Leonard. "Our company's reputation for quality, and as an innovator, is serving us well as demand for our types of products reaches new levels."