

Pride Pak unveils plans for \$15.5 million Medina facility

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MEDINA — It wasn't quite Pride Pak's first impression, but it was a good one.

Plans for the Canadian fresh fruit and vegetable processing, packing and distribution company's intended Medina facility were detailed Tuesday amid a giddy atmosphere at the village Planning Board meeting.

Pride Pak hopes to have a 62,000-square-foot facility open in the Medina Business Park by June 2016; a \$15.5 million development that impressed village planning board members and trustees and had economic development officials beaming with pride.

"Medina hasn't had a project of this size and magnitude in years," Orleans EDA Vice President Gabrielle Barone said. "(Pride Pak) is the kind of profile that we believe is good for us. It's agricultural, it's privately-owned and it's focused on (Orleans County)."

Pride Pak would employ 85 to 100 people in the Phase I plan detailed Tuesday, with significant room to grow the facility to the north. Barone said the 13-acre parcel Pride Pak intends to purchase would accommodate expansion to nearly 250,000 square-feet and more than 200 jobs.

The facility, located in the southwest corner of the Medina Business Park, would operate 2.5 daily shifts, with production shifts starting about 7 a.m. and 10 p.m., with a sanitizing shift in the late afternoon.

"Basically, there will be people there 24/7, which we like to see," Pride Pak CEO Steve Karr said.

Pride Pak is a private-label packager of fresh, "out of the bag and onto the plate" fruit and vegetable products, Karr said, with roughly half of its current production exported to the U.S. from facilities in Mississauga and Nova Scotia.



Pride Pak

Pride Pak CEO Steve Karr was the center of attention as village trustees talked about the Canadian fresh produce processor's plans for Medina following a village Planning Board meeting Tuesday. The project's site plan will go before a public hearing next month. (Jim Krencik/Daily News)

Wegmans is one of Pride Pak's long-time partners, and Karr hopes to add more New York growers to their cadre of suppliers, starting with carrots and root vegetables, and with organic salad greens in the future.

"Our doors will be open," Karr said.

Pride Pak's decision to build new came after an earlier effort by the Orleans EDA to have the company locate in the former Bernzomatic facility in the village. Barone said the business park site offered the land and the sewer, water and power infrastructure Pride Pak needed.

Karr said construction will hopefully progress throughout the winter, as the necessary equipment is scheduled to be in hand by April.

As detailed by BME Associates Michael Simon to Planning Board members, the proposed building, parking and infrastructure plan for Pride Pak would not require any variances.

The State DOT did not find any issues during a traffic study for the expected 45 monthly truck deliveries; and the Medina Fire Department is satisfied with the 360-degree road access around the building; Simon said waste water flowing to a pumping station across from Western New York Energy's ethanol plant campus won't be an issue.

"It's simply washing the vegetables, no pre-treatment will be needed before the water is discharged," Simon said.

The Planning Board accepted the site plan application as complete, and forwarded it to the county Planning Board for review later this month.

Pride Pak's proposal will have a final public hearing at the November village Planning Board meeting, but village trustees Marguerite Sherman, Mike Sidari and Owen Toale heard more than enough for their personal approval Tuesday after chatting with Karr and Pride Pak Vice President for Finance Mauro LoRusso long after the Planning Board presentation ended.

Having seen the project take shape from the sidelines, they left even more impressed seeing the designs and plans for the business.

"It's going to be a real cornerstone for development," Sidari said.

"That's as close to brick-and-mortar as you can get, it's great to see it come together," Toale added.

Sherman said Pride Pak gives Medina a business it can be proud in and benefit from.

"They will help businesses and our farmers — everyone benefits."