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Eatery chain moves into region

McAlister's Deli has some 330 restaurants in a total of 24 states

By KERRY FELTNER

McAlister's Deli, a fast casual franchise based in the Atlanta suburb of Alpharetta, has opened in Monroe County with plans to add another four locations in the region by 2020, officials said.

The expansion has created 45 jobs locally and is expected to create roughly 200 jobs over the next five years.

Josh Bruckel and his father, Peter, are developing McAlister's Rochester ter-

ritory. Together they own and operate 13 gas stations and have run Dunkin' Donuts and Manhattan Bagel franchises in the past.

The family business owns and operates a few businesses: PEMM LLC, dba Quicklee's, which has 13 gas stations; Morgan Estates Adult Care Facility; Vita-Rite LLC, which sells Vburst Vitamin Shot, in Avon, Livingston County; Bruckel Del Group LLC, which is the McAlister's Deli franchisee; and P.S. Bruckel Inc. in Avon,



which does industrial painting.

The gas stations are located in Monroe County with two in Henrietta and one in Webster.

Together the family's firms employ some 300 people.

McAlister's Deli was founded in 1989 and is known for its Southern style options, including its McAlister's Famous Sweet Tea. The company offers customers roughly 70 products, including sandwiches and salads. The company has some 330 restaurants in 24 states, officials said.

Josh Bruckel, a Rochester native and CEO of the local franchise, first experienced McAlister's as a college student. "I had gone to school down in N.C. State in 2003 and that's when I went into

my first McAlister's," he said. "After I ate there I immediately called my father and said 'we have to put one of these up in New York.'"

The first restaurant in New York is located at 3023 South Winton Road in Henrietta. It opened Nov. 16.

The Bruckels are working on opening a second location in Brockport next year. Josh Bruckel hopes to eventually open eight to 10 restaurants in the region.

Competition is present in Rochester but not insurmountable, he said.

"I believe Panera is our closest competitor, but in terms of service ours is unmatched," Bruckel said. "You walk in, order your food and we take care of the rest; we have quite a few options and it's all great food."

In addition to the Rochester area, McAlister's plans to expand in north-west Indiana and Chicago markets, officials said.

The signing of the multiunit development agreements here and in Chicago and Indiana allows the company to expand McAlister's into undeveloped markets with strong growth potential, said Jeffrey Sturgis, McAlister's chief development officer.

"The brand has experienced great success throughout southern Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, and we look forward to further growing our footprint and fan base into the Midwest and upstate New York," he said.

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Work begins on \$4 million complex in Orleans County

By ANDREA DECKERT

Work has begun on a \$4 million 75,000-square-foot distribution complex for an agricultural chemical manufacturer in Ridgeway, Orleans County.

Helena Chemical Co. Inc. said the six-building complex will serve as a distribution point for chemicals, seeds and other agricultural products. The Ridgeway site gives the company rail access and the ability to expand, company leaders said.

Mitchell Wilbur, Helena Chemical's branch manager, said the facility also will allow the company to offer more products and services.

"The quality of the agriculture is what brought us here; there are good farmers growing good crops," he said.

Helena Chemical provides services to agricultural clients and communities, such as crop protection products, fertilizer and application services, and specialized nutrients and seed treatments.

The site will include a:

- 23,000-square-foot processing plant;
- 20,000-square-foot agri-chemical warehouse;
- 20,000-square-foot seed-packaging warehouse;
- 7,140-square-foot liquid fertilizer building;
- 2,300-square-foot office building; and
- 2,500-square-foot shop building.

The two-phase project will be completed over three years. Site work by Allied Builders Inc. has begun, and con-

struction moving forward will depend on the weather.

The project is estimated to employ 12 full-time and six part-time workers at the site initially, and to increase that number as operations at the site grow.

Company leaders pointed out the site will be used only for distribution-related activities; chemicals will not be manufactured there. The business has a distribution site in nearby Albion, also in Orleans County, but the Ridgeway location eventually will replace that one, company leaders said.

Based in Memphis, Tenn., Helena Chemical was founded in 1957 and has 450 branch locations and additional di-

vision offices across the United States, employing over 4,000 people. It has other local sites in Geneva, Ontario County, and Genoa, Cayuga County, according to the company Web site.

The Orleans Economic Development Association has worked with the company for the past five years. In 2009, the agency began working with Ridgeway town officials on business development. It began looking at land near state Route 31 where businesses would have rail access, which was ultimately a draw for Helena Chemical.

James Whipple, CEO of the OEDA, said long-term strategic planning helps bring companies such as Helena Chemical to the county, having a positive impact on its economic development.

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