



Little Leaf Farms purchased 44.1 acres across five sites in the McAdoo Industrial Park and plans to construct a greenhouse similar the one pictured here that the company operates in Massachusetts.

Little Leaf Farms expanding to Greater Hazleton because of region's food processing reputation

Little Leaf Farms, a Massachusetts-based company, was looking for an area with a food processing industry reputation and direct access to key transportation routes to service major markets south of New England.

It found the ideal location to expand its production and open its first Pennsylvania greenhouse in Greater Hazleton, specifically McAdoo Industrial Park. Little Leaf Farms Founder and CEO Paul Sellew said Northeast PA's food industry reputation was a key factor in the company's decision.

"Northeast Pennsylvania really understands the needs of a growing food processing industry and we are proud to be part of this growing community," Sellew said.

Lindsay Hardie, Vice President of Marketing for Little Leaf Farms, said having this new greenhouse within miles of Interstates 80 and 81 will allow the company to service other major markets more efficiently.

"The McAdoo area is a great location to access a number of major markets where we are growing. The NYC Metro area, Philadelphia and the entire Mid-Atlantic region are all growth markets for our company," Hardie said. "Demand has quickly outpaced what we can grow in our New England greenhouses and, at the same time, grocers outside of New England have discovered our unique

products and have expressed interest in distributing our lettuce in more locations throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions."



The company plans to build a greenhouse with a glass roof across 10 acres. Site work is underway and the greenhouse construction is expected to begin this summer with an anticipated opening in the first quarter of 2022.

The new highly-sophisticated facility will hydroponically grow lettuce products to be sold in grocery stores as part of the company's effort to create a local, sustainable food source within a one-day drive of the area.

Sellew said CAN DO's assistance throughout the site selection process was a valuable asset to the company. "Working with CAN DO has been extremely helpful as we navigate the purchase and construction of our new greenhouse site. Their knowledge of the region is unparalleled and they have been a valuable partner to us throughout the entire process."



Like its Massachusetts greenhouse, Little Leaf Farms' new highly-sophisticated McAdoo Industrial Park facility will hydroponically grow lettuce products to be sold in grocery stores as part of the company's effort to create a local, sustainable food source within a one-day drive of the area.

Transportation, workforce and infrastructure benefits make Greater Hazleton a top industrial development market

Greater Hazleton continues to rank as one of the top industrial development markets in the country because of its immediate access to several major interstate highways, dedicated workforce and utility infrastructure.

That reputation, along with the fact that land development approvals were already in place for the site, was a deciding factor in MRP Industrial's recent sale of a 91.5-acre site in Humboldt Industrial Park to a manufacturing company.

MRP Industrial Principal Matt Clymer said that tenants continuously place Greater Hazleton in their site selection process, especially because they find sites with land development approvals in place and that makes constructing a building a more efficient process.

"Tenants that we speak with now include Greater Hazleton on every major regional distribution center site selection process. They firmly believe that the access to the major interstate systems, combined with the labor and infrastructure, provide an incredible platform to move quickly with their site selection process and, ultimately, increase their speed to market."

Clymer added that Pennsylvania has experienced unprecedented growth over the past 10 years and tenants continue to inquire about sites in Greater Hazleton.

"As some of the earliest developed submarkets began to see limited opportunities for additional development, tenants expanded their search criteria along the major interstates with a focus on transportation ease and labor availability. Northeast PA, and Greater Hazleton in particular, are unmatched in this regard," he said. "The abundant labor force with a reputation for great work ethic has long drawn manufacturing and other industries to the area. Beyond that, the readily available utilities and roadway



Sites across CAN DO's parks, including the Humboldt Industrial Park, provide companies easy access to the interstate highways and utilities.

system in Humboldt Industrial Park were properly designed for the growth within the park and differentiated Humboldt from other industrial development opportunities both within Greater Hazleton as well as Northeast PA."

In addition to Greater Hazleton being a prime location for development, Clymer said that working with CAN DO and other local officials has been an asset to MRP Industrial's development work in the region.

"CAN DO was incredibly helpful and welcoming from the first visit as we tried to familiarize ourselves with the community and development opportunities it offered. CAN DO's intimate knowledge of everything businesses would focus on during the site selection process

made it clear to us that they would be an invaluable asset during our process," he said. "CAN DO's master planned development made for a relatively easy entitlement process in Humboldt Industrial Park. The local municipality, Hazle Township, was welcoming from day one and were a pleasure to work with on approvals."

When working on its latest project in Humboldt, Clymer said MRP Industrial found that the site's layout "provided great flexibility for tenants with multiple points of access, full building circulation and abundant auto and trailer parking" and sold the site to a tenant within a year of the first inquiry.

Clymer added that MRP Industrial looks forward to continuing its longstanding relationship with CAN DO. "The CAN DO team are among the most professional business development organizations I've ever worked with. Their depth of understanding of tenant needs really allows them to present the crucial information important to prospects. When you've only got a few minutes with a prospect on a multi-site or multi-state tour, the first impression is critical and theirs is unmatched," he said.

Nexii chooses Hazleton location for its first U.S. facility because of access to key transportation routes

Nexii Building Solutions, Inc., headquartered in Canada, is a green construction technology company that manufactures green building and retrofit products. Representatives from Nexii selected a site in Hazleton for its first U.S. production facility because of the immediate access to key transportation routes and a workforce that meets its needs.

The company anticipates hiring between 180 and 230 new, skilled green manufacturing jobs. Once it becomes fully operational, the business will produce more than 8 million square feet of building panels every year, and service projects across the Northeast U.S. markets, including New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

Nexii is opening the plant under a licensed manufacturing agreement with John Wolfington, who has sponsored the acquisition, leasing and development of several million square feet of commercial real estate during his career. Wolfington said Greater Hazleton's prime location was a key factor in Nexii choosing the location to expand its operations into the U.S.

"We are excited to bring more innovation to Greater Hazleton with clean technology that will help transform major markets across the Northeast corridor into greener cities. Highway systems and locations are key elements to get our products out to our customers. The Northeast corridor of Pennsylvania is a perfect

location for us to serve the northeastern part of the U.S.," Wolfington said.



Through his NEXUS-1 entity, Wolfington is working with CAN DO, the City of Hazleton and the Pennsylvania CareerLink, among other partners, to support financing, job creation and training capital toward the opening of the plant.

Wolfington said, "Working with Mark Minnig and CAN DO has been a pleasure. Mark has been a great help in executing and explaining business financing programs. The Mayor of the City of Hazleton and his team have been very helpful with any issues we've had. They are helping us with the process of getting a rail spur put in as well as transportation to the plant. The Hazleton CareerLink office has been coordinating with our HR team to put together job fairs and is working with us on our hiring process."

Stephen Sidwell, CEO of Nexii, said, "The demand for sustainable and affordable buildings in the Northeastern U.S. market is greater than ever. From constructing new residential and commercial buildings that meet and exceed new sustainability and energy efficiency standards, to retrofitting existing structures to improve durability and lower operating costs, Nexii is affordably reducing the climate impacts of buildings."

CAN BE amenities and services help Candelles expand operations in just three years

Handmade soy candle company Candelles went from a startup that once operated out of the kitchen of its co-founders to a thriving business in just three years because of the amenities and services it received from CAN BE.

Co-founders Kelley Major and C.J. Graaf chose to move into the CAN BE Innovation Center in November of 2017 because it offered the company a small space to start out with the option to expand when it was ready. They are now taking that next step and moving into a 6,800 square-foot space in the CAN DO Corporate Center in Drums.

Just 15 months after Candelles moved into a 900 square-foot space at CAN BE, the company expanded to 2,500 square feet, which allowed it to streamline its own operations and provide fulfillment services for other small businesses.

Major said the options and services CAN BE provided the company included the support it needed to grow into the operation it is today.

"CAN BE's facility has been an awesome starting point to begin scaling Candelles. By providing us a utility-included rent option that increased yearly as we grew, and having the flexibility to grow from 900 square feet to 2,500 square feet, it really made the jump from a small office space to an actual warehouse setting seem much less daunting," she said.

In addition to growing its physical space, Candelles has also expanded its workforce since moving into CAN BE. In 2017 when the company moved in, Major and Graaf were handling all the work themselves. Now, they are a seven-person team and had a total of 10 employees during the busy holiday season. Major hopes to have as many as 15 to 20 people on staff by the end of 2021.

Major said CAN BE is an ideal place for small businesses owners to start their operations.

"They can assist in helping form your business and all the red tape that goes behind it, as well as connect you with helpful services local to the community. They also provide start-ups the opportunity to get out of their homes or garages and create a more professional working space, which can be crucial to making your dream business a reality," she said.

Candelles worked with Griff Keefer of Hinerfeld Commercial Real Estate to find their new location in the CAN DO Corporate Center. Hinerfeld CRE provides leasing services to the owners of the multi-tenant office/warehouse flex industrial building that Candelles moved into. Keefer said that Hinerfeld's longstanding relationship with CAN DO made finding a new home for Candelles an easy process.

"Hinerfeld CRE works regularly and cooperatively with CAN DO to



Candelles co-founders Kelley Major and C.J. Graaf used CAN BE's business services to grow their operations and graduate from CAN BE after just three years.

assist in commercial real estate projects in the Greater Hazleton area. We set up a tour of the space with the property owner and Candelles. Following the tour, Candelles found one of the available spaces to be suitable for their needs and selected a 6,800 square-foot space with office, distribution/manufacturing space, and docks," he said. "The ongoing interactive communication, experience and market knowledge of CAN DO and Hinerfeld CRE provided quickly viable options for Candelles to find a new home to expand their business operations."

Keefer added that CAN DO is an organization that "fosters a positive and professional business atmosphere" and is "essential to the successful growth of businesses in the region."

"Hinerfeld Commercial Real Estate has enjoyed a sustained, collaborative relationship with CAN DO for many years. In our past dealings, we've communicated on possible best uses for the available properties and CAN DO provided valuable input on available industry support programs the prospective owners could engage," he said. "Hinerfeld Commercial Real Estate holds the team at CAN DO in the highest regard for its skill and professionalism in the industry. We especially thank Joe Lettiere and his staff for their longstanding support of the Greater Hazleton area business community and their confidence in Hinerfeld CRE as a partner in the commercial real estate markets in Northeast PA."

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CAN DO Marketing Staff

Joseph Lettiere.....President & CEO..... jlettieri@hazletoncando.com

Jocelyn Sterenchock.. Director of Economic Development... jsterenchock@hazletoncando.com

Melissa Frederick..... Marketing Specialist..... mfrederick@hazletoncando.com

Phone: 800-54-CANDO or 570-455-1508 Web: www.hazletoncando.com



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