Hazleton ideal for food industry

Tootsie Roll, Hershey, others benefit from strategic location

A long-standing and growing industry cluster in Greater Hazleton is food processing, as many companies that make or distribute food products are located in the area. Drawn by the region’s strategic location, proximity to major roadways and transportation networks, competitive operating environment and a highly rated workforce, companies such as Tootsie Roll Industries, The Hershey Company, Gonnella Frozen Products, Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), Cargill Meat Solutions and Otis Spunkmeyer have chosen to operate facilities in CAN DO’s industrial parks.

Gonnella Frozen Products makes frozen dough such as bread and rolls from Humboldt Industrial Park. The company sells its products to supermarket chains, which bake them on site to sell to grocery customers. Gonnella manufactures more than 1 million pounds of product in Hazleton each year.

Plant Manager Drew Hoben said Gonnella’s Hazleton location is an advantage for the company, noting, “This facility is state of the art within our system, and having the facility in the Hazleton area has led to operational costs that are lower overall. We consider the location central and a driving factor in our overall success,” he said.

In addition to its strategic location, Greater Hazleton also has a workforce that employers describe as invaluable.

Gene Tannler, senior director of manufacturing at The Hershey Company, which creates well-known products such as Hershey’s Milk Chocolate, Kit Kat, Cadbury and Caramello from its facility in Humboldt Industrial Park, noted the contributions that Hershey’s employees make to its bottom line.

“Our success at Hazleton begins with our great people. They have an outstanding ‘can do’ attitude, a high degree of ownership, and there is a tremendous amount of pride around the plant. Hazleton also provides a strong pool of candidates when we have open positions. Each time we look for new employees, the number of applicants exceeds what we need. So in Hazleton, we have great people and a great location,” he said.

Other companies in the food industry see the Hazleton area as an advantageous location to establish a distribution center, such as the one Tootsie Roll Industries operates in Humboldt Industrial Park.

The company distributes all 43 of its brands from its Hazleton center, with up to 70 million pounds of candy each year going through the local facility.

Tootsie Roll General Manager Scott Cox said the company chose to locate in Hazleton because of its excellent location for food distribution. “The workforce and location have continued to be a benefit for us. Since we’re near the crossroads of Interstates 80 and 81, trucks entering and leaving our facility can easily access roads to the north, south, east or west and we have the ability to attract many trucking firms,” Cox said.

Packaging companies that serve the needs of the food industry also have facilities in Greater Hazleton.

Tech Packaging President Bob Janes said Greater Hazleton was an ideal location for his food packaging company, the latest to open in Humboldt Industrial Park. “Since our company has been experiencing such a large volume of growth, we wanted a bigger location and saw the site in Humboldt Industrial Park as perfect for our needs,” he said.

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The law firm of Laputka, Bayless, Ecker & Cohn, P.C. recently moved into new offices in the CAN DO Renaissance Center in downtown Hazleton. The firm occupies approximately 3,500 square feet of office space on the third floor of the Renaissance Center.

Attorney Robert Sensky, one of the partners in the firm, said he appreciated working with CAN DO to find the ideal location for the firm. “We are extremely pleased to be in this building and to remain downtown as part of the Hazleton legal and business communities. The location and the presence it provides are superb. We really could not have asked for a more suitable space. CAN DO worked hard to make this move as easy and seamless as possible for our firm and we look forward to spending many prosperous years here,” Sensky said.

The firm moved from a building that is being renovated in downtown Hazleton, opting to remain part of the ongoing downtown revitalization that is bringing new business to Hazleton.

The comprehensive revitalization includes the renovation of two of the largest office buildings in the downtown, as well as traffic improvements through the Broad Street Corridor Project, which has added a new streetscape to the downtown. CAN DO’s staff worked with Laputka, Bayless, Ecker & Cohn to create the fit-out the firm was seeking and to get them into the space early.

Vice President of Sales and Marketing Joseph Lettiere said that industrial real estate activity in the community continues to trend upward and that CAN DO can help companies searching for a new home in the Hazleton area. “This reflects our understanding that most of the job growth and capital investment in the community is created by existing companies and we are committed to assisting local businesses. CAN DO’s relationship with companies in Greater Hazleton continues long after the initial real estate transaction is completed, as we are able to assist companies in a number of ways, including helping them find space as they grow,” he said.

As a result of the recent expansion and move, two new industrial/flex spaces will be available for lease by late summer in Multi-Tenant Buildings #7B and #7C. 24,000 SF will be available in 7B and 9,100 SF will be available in 7C. To learn more, contact CAN DO’s marketing department at 570-455-1508.

A local manufacturer of sanitary paper products is expanding to CAN DO’s Multi-Tenant Building #2 (shown here) in Valmont Industrial Park.

A local manufacturer of sanitary paper products is expanding to CAN DO’s Multi-Tenant Building #2 in Valmont Industrial Park. CAN DO recently purchased the building to add to its portfolio of real estate offerings. CAN DO owns, maintains and leases several hundred square feet of buildings as part of its inventory, including multi-tenant complexes.

The tenant’s new location is 60,000 square feet, a sizeable increase from its previous 35,000-square-foot footprint. CAN DO is scheduled to complete renovations and deliver the building this summer.

Knowing the company was outgrowing its space, CAN DO began speaking with company leaders to find a suitable solution. CAN DO was able to find the company an ideal location while keeping it in the Hazleton area, retaining those jobs for the community. To supplement our ability to fulfill their real estate needs, CAN DO also helped the company with financial assistance for the project.

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To promote the growth of the food processing cluster, CAN DO has developed a blog, www.wecandofood.com, which features stories of local food processors and their successes. The blog details the benefits of Greater Hazleton for companies in the food industry and provides a way for food processing companies to publicize their achievements.

The blog is complemented by a brochure that highlights the benefits of a Greater Hazleton location for food processing companies, along with updates to CAN DO’s website, making it even more comprehensive.

“These initiatives will help us promote the many specific benefits for food processing companies in Greater Hazleton,” explained CAN DO Vice President of Sales and Marketing Joseph Lettiere. “Our area offers a unique set of advantages that make it ideally situated for companies that create or distribute food or packaging.”

Tech Packaging, Inc., recently began operations in its new facility (top photo) in Humboldt Industrial Park. The company provides packaging services for major household names such as Frito Lay, Del Monte, PepsiCo and Kellogg’s. About $15 million in inventory will pass through Tech Packaging’s Greater Hazleton center each year.

American Eagle Outfitters, Inc., is finishing construction on its 1 million SF facility (bottom photo) in Humboldt Industrial Park. The company expects to begin operations in late June at its new distribution center, which will be the largest industrial building in the Hazleton area.

Blog, brochure highlight Hazleton’s benefits

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Why are so many food services companies choosing to do business in Hazleton, PA?

To promote the growth of the food processing cluster, CAN DO has developed a blog (left) and brochure (above) that feature more details about the food processing industry in Hazleton, along with the advantages the area holds for food processors.
Featured Properties

Light Manufacturing / Distribution / Warehouse
MT #7B
Valmont Industrial Park
103 Rotary Drive, West Hazleton, PA

- 24,000 SF
- Light manufacturing, distribution or warehouse
- Loading docks
- Just one mile off Interstate 81
- Only 6 miles from Interstate 80-81 interchange
- Within 25 miles of more than a half million people

Available this summer!
Contact CAN DO today at 570-455-1508!

Office / Distribution / Light Manufacturing
MT #7C
Valmont Industrial Park
115 Rotary Drive, West Hazleton, PA

- 9,117 SF
- Flex space suited for office, light manufacturing or distribution
- Loading docks
- Only 1 mile from Interstate 81 with visibility from the interstate

Available this summer!
Contact CAN DO today at 570-455-1508!

For information about these or any other properties, call 800.54.CANDO outside PA or 570.455.1508, send an e-mail to cando@hazletoncando.com or visit our website at www.hazletoncando.com