

Rell, Stewart Announce Carvel's Move to the City

NEW BRITAIN - Gov. M. Jodi Rell and Mayor Timothy Stewart made it official Wednesday: Ice cream maker Carvel Corp. will build office space and a manufacturing facility in the city.

Carvel, which has a division headquarters in Rocky Hill, plans to build a 120,000-square-foot plant on Booth and Myrtle streets in the downtown area known as the Smart Park.

The proposal will include administrative offices, food production space and deep-frozen storage and allow the company to create new, gourmet desserts.

Tim Shanley, a company vice president, said Celebration Foods, Carvel's parent company, will move its 40 employees from Rocky Hill. It plans to add 225 workers in New Britain within the next three years.

"This project is responsible growth at its best," Rell said. "It's the blockbuster announcement we've all been waiting for: 225 new jobs and the reuse of prime industrial land in the heart of the city. The new jobs will benefit many, but this project also will ensure a company with Connecticut roots can continue to be an anchor in the region."

The governor added that "the fact that a national, well-respected organization such as Celebration Foods wants to locate its operations in New Britain is a clear signal businesses recognize the many positive attributes the city has to offer: a central location between New York and Boston, easy highway access and, most of all, a ready, willing and able work force."

The Common Council approved the deal unanimously at its Wednesday meeting. Stewart was pleased, to say the least, about the development. "Without a doubt, this is the most exciting moment of my three-and-a-half years as mayor," he said. "Not only does this put the former Fafnir site, vacant for over 10 years, back on the property tax rolls, it will mean quality jobs for New Britain residents."

Calling the decision by Carvel "a lifetime opportunity for the city," Stewart expressed gratitude to everyone from Rell and state agencies such as the Department of Economic and Community Development to the city's Common Council, staff and "of course to Celebration Foods and [Centerplan Development](#)."

Centerplan will remake the land and put up buildings for Carvel. Use of the proposed building, with an estimated value of \$16.3 million in facilities, machinery and equipment, is expected to result in more than \$500,000 in real and personal property tax revenue for the city.

The state could see an economic return estimated to be in excess of \$23 million over 10 years. Tom Carvel, who began selling ice cream in 1929 from the back of his truck in New York, set standards in the ice cream industry and in business practices and franchising.



Gov. M. Jodi Rell announces that Smart Park I on the corner of Myrtle and Booth streets in New Britain will become an office and manufacturing facility of Carvel Corp. on Wednesday. Amy Reed/The Herald ([Buy Herald photos](#))

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By: Scott Whipple

(continued from previous page)

He brought his company to Connecticut in 1953 and opened his first ice cream store in Glastonbury. Although Carvel's supermarket headquarters is in Rocky Hill, sites outside of Connecticut were considered for the new plant.

The company also makes its products in Massachusetts, Maryland and California and sells its desserts in supermarkets and warehouse clubs in 43 states. Carvel will be making use of a brown-field site, a polluted and neglected area successfully cleaned up through the state's brownfields program. Stewart has called it "a key component of the city's economic vision and revitalization."

Centerplan President [Robert Landino](#) said Carvel should be at work in New Britain by April. The land deal is to close Friday; work on the site is to begin Monday. Jim Wyskiewicz, Democratic candidate for mayor and a council member, said it was "Common Council efforts of the last two months, actively passing legislation, that facilitated this effort."

Scott Whipple can be reached at swhipple@newbritainherald.com or by calling (860) 225-4601, ext. 319.