



ISLIP TALKS Business

Food Manufacturing and Distribution on the Forefront

Long Island enjoys some of the best food in the country. Whether it's pizza or pasta, jerk chicken or Jamaican beef patties, carrot cake or cookies—we sure know how to eat and manufacture food. In Islip Town, we've taken food manufacturing and distribution to a whole new level, and our foodie cluster is continuing to thrive.

Here's a look at some of our food manufacturers:

Constance Food Group

It's true! Going green is a viable option for food companies, and the Office of Economic Development (OED) helped Constance Food Group to build a green manufacturing facility by pursuing New York state and Long Island Power Authority

Who's Who in Islip Town

- Constance Food Group
- J. Kings Food Service
- Red Castle Bakeries
- Silver Lake Cookie
- Whitsons Culinary Group

(LIPA) grants. Constance supplies goods to all of the 7-Eleven convenience stores in Long Island, New York City, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Westchester County—a big job requiring a lot of water. Constance's Bill Norris, along with 7-Eleven and its design team, found a way to dramatically reduce the water usage and
(Continued on next page)

Foodies Welcome: Booming Food Cluster on the Rise in Islip

By Phil Nolan

Islip Town Supervisor

It's Economics 101: Industry clusters benefit a region's stability and overall economic strength. Simply put, clusters promote creativity, and foster interdependence and strategic partnerships among firms. This may be why Islip's most vital industry cluster will leave a good taste in your mouth.

The food manufacturing and distribution sector is a boon in a town where the aerospace industry once ruled the roost. Our Office of Economic Development (OED) has identified at least 10 companies that fit the food cluster category. Five are profiled in this issue of *Islip Talks Business*. Islip's OED promotes networking opportunities among these companies while finding grants and other incentive programs to promote their development.

In this issue, you'll learn how the food manufacturing and distribution sector developed in Islip, and how the companies are benefitting from their business relationships. You will also learn about an innovative green manufacturing facility, built by Constance Food Group and 7-Eleven, which saves 80,000 gallons of water per day and uses 30 percent less energy. From the veteran companies to the newbies, these companies are proud—and profiting—as part of Islip Town's booming food cluster.



Constance Foods recently completed work on their fully green facility. Pictured are David Robinson, senior vice president; William Norris, CEO; and Michael Norris, president.

energy consumption and save money in order to better serve its customers and the environment. Constance moved into the state-of-the-art facility this past August. (For more information about Constance Food Group's green facility, read "Islip Town Industrial Development Agency Helps Company Go Green," on the next page.)

Constance's Norris says the incentives highlighted by the OED have helped grow its business, adding that relocating to Islip Town is saving money too by reducing mileage. "Being located next to Long Island MacArthur Airport has made travel to and from our Islip location more convenient for both our employees and customers," says Norris.

J. Kings Food Service

If the local food business was a pie, then J. Kings Food Service would be a hefty slice. This food distribution and supply company is well aware of the benefits of being located in the Town of Islip's foodie cluster and leverages its market niche by working synergistically with other town-based businesses such as Jonathan Lord and Wenner Bread, companies that use J. Kings' services to transport their food products.

But it's J. Kings' position as the largest food service distributor of Long Island produce that has really amped

up its market presence. "Our area, more so than the rest of the country, is dominated by independent restaurants. Our Town of Islip locale lets us do business with everyone from the Waldorf-Astoria and Carnegie Deli to Claudio's in Greenport and the Montauk Bake Shoppe," notes owner John King. "New York City is the food capital of the world, so Islip's direct access to the city is paramount for our business." J. Kings also counts local delis, restaurants, hospitals, country clubs, and colleges as customers.

Islip Town and the



Headquartered in John King's home in 1973, J. Kings facility is now located in Holtsville.

OED have been a crucial component in elevating the business to this crowning level, says King. "The OED has been extremely supportive in finding financing and tax benefits for our expansion," he says. "We are now the 11th largest independent distributor in the country, one of the largest in the state, and the largest on Long Island."

Red Castle Bakeries

Red Castle Bakeries found its way to the Town of Islip in October 2007 after being displaced from its New York City home by an urban renewal project. Marco Minuto, Red Castle's owner, says he's happy with the move to Islip Town. "Although I'm not originally from the area, Islip has provided Red Castle with an excellent workforce, customer base, and access to major markets," says Minuto. "And because of this I'm proud to occupy this new facility." In fact, relocation to the Islip area gives Red Castle access to a number of large grocery store chains and business opportunities along the East Coast, he says.

Minuto says his exhaustive search for a new headquarters was made easier by the Town's OED. Red Castle scouted locations in upstate New York, New Jersey, and even Pennsylvania before moving to Islip. "The OED team has been very helpful with the relocation of my business. They take our calls seriously and come back with answers immediately," says Minuto.

Silver Lake Cookie

Islip Town brings success through incentives and support from being part of the Empire Zone program to two brothers in the multi-million-dollar baking business. Owned by Joe and Rocco Vitarelli, Silver Lake manufactures bakery goods, specializing in high-quality cookies. Its customers include A&P, Grand Union, P&C, Sysco, Wal-Mart, and Costco.

One of the first food companies to relocate to Islip, Silver Lake has maintained a long, healthy relationship with the OED and credits it as a crucial part of their success. The OED helped with everything from the first major move, which was to relocate to Islip, to their most

Tools for You in Islip

LOW-COST FINANCING

- Tax-Exempt Industrial Revenue Bond Financing
- NYS Job Development Authority
- Federal SBA 504 Loans

TAX ABATEMENTS, EXEMPTIONS, CREDITS

- Industrial Development Agency
- NYS Empire Zones Program

GRANTS

- NYS Industrial Effectiveness Program
- NYS Environmental Investment Program

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- NYS Global Export Marketing Services
- NYS Manufacturing Assistance Program

ENERGY CONSERVATION

- National Grid Energy Efficiency Program
- LIPA Energy Efficiency Program
- LIPA Commercial Construction Program
- National Grid Cinderella Program

For more information, please contact Bill Mannix, Director of the Economic Development Office, at 631-224-5512.

recent move, which was to expand in 1999, says co-owner Rocco Vitarelli. “The OED has well exceeded our expectations. Not only did we get the help we needed to move to Islip in 1985, when we needed to expand in 1999, support from the OED was there again,” he says. “Currently, we are part of the Empire Zone program, another program designed to help local businesses stay competitive.”

Though they are Long Island boys at heart, the Vitarellis say if not for the OED’s help, they might have taken the company out-of-state. “Of course, if it didn’t make economic sense to stay on Long Island, I might well be a Texan right now. Fortunately, the OED facilitated our pursuit of low-cost funding and tax incentives that made staying on Long Island a reality,” says Rocco Vitarelli.

Whitsons Culinary Group

Growth takes on a new meaning when speaking about Whitsons Culinary Group, a family-owned dining services company. After being designated the Town of Islip

Empire Zone’s first Regionally Significant Project in June 2006, the company became so successful it hired 100 new employees, doubling job-growth expectations. Upon hearing about this growth, Islip Town Supervisor Phil Nolan gained approval for Whitsons to expand into a vacant lot across from its current location by writing to

New York Governor David Paterson in order to expedite the process.

The town’s support did not stop there, says Beth Bunster, chief financial officer of Whitsons. “Qualifying as an Empire Zone regionally significant project, Supervisor Nolan and the OED have helped us obtain real property tax credits, wage credits, investment tax credits, sales tax abatement, and better LIPA rates,” says



Marco Minuto, of Red Castle Bakeries, manufactures Jamaican beef patties.



Whitsons Culinary Center boasts state-of-the-art equipment. A vacuumizer seals chicken cutlets to ensure freshness and compliance with the strictest sanitary standards.

Bunster. “These incentives made a tremendous difference to financially enable us to make this move.”

The company now looks forward to adding another 50 jobs in the next three years. “Our experience has been that the town is very supportive of food companies, and will continue to make this a very attractive area for businesses to build and grow their facilities.” ■

Islip Town Industrial Development Agency Helps Company Go Green

Innovation is a business’ best friend. And much like the synergy between creative design and business, Constance Food Group and 7-Eleven worked together to develop a green manufacturing facility that saves 80,000 gallons of water per day (GPD) and requires 30 percent less energy to operate. Islip Town’s Industrial Development Agency, which is affiliated with the OED, was awarded a New York State Environmental Investment Program environmental grant to facilitate this project.

The state-of-the-art facility was developed when Constance and 7-Eleven signed a 15-year agreement to provide and distribute fresh food products to 7-Eleven stores in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.

The new structure features a central screw compressor refrigeration system that uses 30 percent less electricity than a conventional system. A tray-washing system installed in the facility will reduce water use from 66,000 GPD to 6,000 GPD. The structure will be cleaned using boosted water pressure, restricted flow rates, and specially designed spray nozzles—which will save 17,000 GPD. Using batch cabinet washers to clean and sanitize the small- and medium-sized tools will save an additional 4,000 GPD.

The facility officially opened in August.

For information on how your company can expand in Islip, please contact Bill Mannix at the Town of Islip’s Economic Development Office at 631-224-5512.