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**Businesses growing in Merrillville**

MERRILLVILLE — The Town of Merrillville continues to be an ideal location to grow a business, and two companies in the AmeriPlex at the Crossroads business park are examples of that.

Both Quality Pasta Company and Midwest Truck & Auto Parts lease space in a building at 9401 Georgia St. in AmeriPlex. The facility was developed by Crow Holdings.

Town officials recently toured both businesses to learn more about their operations as well as ways Merrillville can assist them.

Representatives from Quality Pasta and Midwest Truck & Auto Parts both indicated the Town has been a great partner, and there are numerous reasons Merrillville stood out when they were considering where to locate their operations.

Among those factors was tax abatement, which the Town granted for both businesses.

Peter Kroner, CEO at Quality Pasta, said the company was considering sites in several states, and the tax incentive helped encourage them to come to Merrillville.

“It allows us to build up this space,” Kroner said.

With the abatement in place, the company can devote more resources to increasing production of its array of products, including macaroni & cheese and Muscle Mac. As production grows, it will reduce costs.

“By time that happens, the tax incentives will wear off,” Kroner said.

Midwest Truck & Auto Parts, a supplier of aftermarket components for heavy, medium, light duty, and performance automotive and truck applications, leases about 125,000 square feet of space in AmeriPlex. Michael Chudacoff, president of Midwest Truck & Auto Parts, said the company knew moving into the brand-new facility in a thriving business park would be good for growth.

Tax abatement helped bring the company to Town, but there were other factors as well. Like Quality Pasta, Midwest Truck & Auto Parts was attracted to Merrillville because of the growing workforce here.

“We knew it would be a tremendous opportunity moving forward,” Chudacoff said.

In 2021, Quality Pasta announced it was creating the manufacturing plant in Merrillville. The plan called for Quality Pasta to employ about 50 people. The company has surpassed that mark with about 70 people on staff in Merrillville. There is room to grow in its 90,000-square-foot location, which means more jobs could be coming there.

“The eye on the future is always what we think of here,” Kroner said.

About 35% of Quality Pasta’s 70 employees are Merrillville residents, and nearly 90% of the total staff live in Lake County.

Midwest Truck & Auto Parts in 2020 announced its plans to move to Merrillville. At that time, the company indicated it would create up to 150 new jobs by the end of 2024. Midwest Truck & Auto Parts is right on pace with that goal with about 140 workers at the Merrillville location.

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