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BREAKING

German company Lidl to open three supermarkets in Cumberland County

THOMAS BARLAS Staff Writer Jan 16, 2017



Craig Matthews / Staff Photographer

The German-operated company Lidl is opening three supermarkets in Cumberland County. They will be in Millville, Vineland and Upper Deerfield Township. The low-cost company will compete with seminal stores, such as Aldi and Save-A-Lot, in Cumberland County. Jan. 11, 2017 (Craig Matthews / Staff Photographer)

A German no-frills supermarket chain will open three stores in Cumberland County this year and could likely compete with similar discount grocers in South Jersey.

The Lidl company has local approvals for stores in Millville, Vineland and Upper Deerfield Township, and construction of the Vineland facility is already underway.

Lidl, pronounced LEE-del, will join other discount supermarkets in South Jersey. They include Aldi, another German-run operation, which has stores in Middle Township, Cape May County, and Vineland and will open another store in Egg Harbor Township in Atlantic County. The domestic no-frills supermarket chain Save-A-Lot also operates six stores in Atlantic, Cumberland and Cape May counties.

The three stores are part of Lidl's plan to open as many as 150 stores on the East Coast by the end of 2017.

Matthew P. Casey, who runs the North Jersey-based supermarket consulting company Matthew P. Casey and Associates, said Lidl will likely compete with Aldi for cost-conscious shoppers in Cumberland County.

"They like the demographics of the county," Casey said of Lidl. "They like very price-conscious shoppers (who) watch their pennies very carefully."

U.S. Census Bureau data show the county's median household income at \$49,984, significantly less than the state's median household income of \$72,093.

The Vineland store is located across West Landis Avenue from a Walmart with a full grocery market and next to a ShopRite. Vineland Economic Development Director Sandy Forosisky said she doesn't think that will cause any problems.

"When you do something in mass like that, it makes it more of a draw for customers," she said. "It's very convenient for them to be all there."

But Casey isn't so sure.

"I think they're going to be in for a rude awakening," Casey said of Lidl. "ShopRite is a very, very, very strong competitor. They don't give up market share easily. I think Lidl is underestimating that company."

Lidl runs more than 10,000 stores across Europe. Those stores, like the ones being planned for the United States, are about 36,000 square feet.

Aldi operates about 1,600 stores in the United States. Those stores are also around 36,000 square feet.

Both chains' no-frills operations involve customers selecting products from cartons or pallets. Customers must bring their own grocery bags.

The Upper Deerfield Township store will be built in the 1000 block of North Pearl Street on property that houses the former Highway 77 motel. It's also a short distance from Carlls Corner, which Mayor James Crilley called the heart of the township's commercial district.

"We welcome any business to come into that area," he said. "We think it will be an asset to the community at once."

Crilley said he visited a Lidl supermarket when he was in Ireland last year.

"They're a different type of store, and you'll find anything from groceries to clothing," Crilley said.

"They're pretty impressive.

"The big thing is they're talking about 40 jobs (at the Upper Deerfield Township store)," he said.

"That's very important to me."

Information about the number of employees who will work at the Millville store, to be built in the 2100 block of North Second Street, wasn't available.

Lidl officials didn't respond to email and phone requests by The Press of Atlantic City for comment.

Cumberland County has lost some supermarkets over the past few years, with Acme supermarkets closing in Millville and Upper Deerfield Township.

Forosisky said Lidl's Vineland store adds another business enterprise to the West Landis Avenue commercial district that city officials have wanted to develop for years. The area around Cumberland Mall, the city's main business district on Route 47, has pretty much reached capacity, she said.

"We think this is going to be the next growth area," Forosisky said of West Landis Avenue.

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