

Hazlet's Red Oak Diner moving; Lidl grocery coming

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(Photo: DAVID P. WILLIS)

HAZLET - The closure of the [Red Oak Diner \(https://www.redoakdiner.com/\)](https://www.redoakdiner.com/) in Hazlet earlier this week paves the way for the construction of a [Lidl grocery store \(https://www.lidl.com/\)](https://www.lidl.com/), one of the first the German supermarket company hopes to open in the United States.

Red Oak Diner owner Dan Kalyna said a closing on the sale of the diner's property, at Route 35 and Bethany Road, occurred earlier than expected. He purchased the business in 2006, but his partner owned the property. "It was an amazing 10-year-run at that location," he said.

On Wednesday, What's Going There ran into Kalyna at the Red Oak. It turns out he is moving the restaurant to a new location at Airport Plaza shopping center on Route 36 in Hazlet. He said he wants to open the new location, which formerly was Kazia's Asian Grab 'n Go, in a week. "It's going to go quick," Kalyna said. "It's gorgeous," he said of the space.

He has a desire to "keep the Red Oak name going," Kalyna said.

Kalyna touted the restaurant's customers and staff. "We have a great crew," he said. "This is what we do." His workers will move with him to the new restaurant, he added.



The Red Oak Diner in Hazlet will be moved to the location of the former Kazia's Asian restaurant in Hazlet. (Photo: DAVID P. WILLIS)

What is Lidl?

Meanwhile, Lidl US, pronounced "leedle," has applied for a construction permit for a 35,962-square-foot \$3.6 million store.

Never heard of Lidl? It operates about 10,000 stores in 27 countries throughout Europe.

"It's a bigger Aldi," said supermarket analyst Matthew Casey, owner of Matthew P. Casey & Associates in Clark. "They are new to the country and they have literally hundreds of sites planned or being pursued up and down the East Coast."

Besides a store in Hazlet, Lidl also has received approvals for stores on Route 35 in Eatontown and Route 9 in Lacey.

Lidl US spokesman William Harwood said the company expects to open its first stores in the United States no later than 2018. The company is not commenting on specific opening dates, he added.

MORE: [Lidl grocery store plans to open in Lacey \(/story/money/business/2016/12/12/lidl-grocery-store-plans-open-lacey/95353050/\)](/story/money/business/2016/12/12/lidl-grocery-store-plans-open-lacey/95353050/)

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An example of a Lidl grocery store in Italy. (Photo: Courtesy of Lidl)

"We are building on the foundation that has made Lidl so successful in Europe, while adapting to serve the unique needs of our customers here," Harwood said in an email statement. "We are committed to delivering our customers uncompromising quality and freshness at the lowest possible prices, and feel Lidl US stores will be unlike anything in the market."

But Casey said Lidl will have a difficult time in the area.

"They are terribly underestimating the strength of the competition," Casey said. Many of the Lidl sites are near high-volume stores such as ShopRite or Walmart.

In Hazlet, Lidl will be near both Aldi and ShopRite. ShopRite and Aldi are on Route 36 in West Long Branch too.

"They think they will be able to steal some of that volume or take away some of that volume," Casey said. "ShopRite will do whatever they have to do to combat Lidl's entrance into the market. ShopRite, Aldi, and other local chains are going to fight them."

Have you seen a construction project in Monmouth or Ocean counties and wanted to know what was going there? Contact business producer Dennis P. Carmody at dcarmody@gannettnj.com, and we will look into it for a future column. For previous stories, visit www.app.com/whatsgoingthere ([/whatsgoingthere](http://www.app.com/whatsgoingthere)). David P. Willis: 732-643-4039; dwillis@gannettnj.com; [facebook.com/dpwillis732](https://www.facebook.com/dpwillis732) (<http://facebook.com/dpwillis732>).

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