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# Business 'pops' up in Huntington warehouse

Previously vacant Stride Rite facility will be used to distribute Weaver Popcorn Co. products

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The long-vacant former Stride Rite warehouse in Huntington has a new owner that plans to use most of the 408,000-square-foot building to distribute products for Weaver Popcorn Co., one of the largest popcorn producers in the world.

Muncie-based DIY Group already has begun moving some product through the facility at 1515 Riverfork Drive West, said Tom Foster, DIY vice president of operations. The Huntington operation is

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## POPCORN: DIY expects to employ 11

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expected to employ 11 people; company-wide, DIY has about 200 workers, he said.

Stride Rite's parent company, Collective Brands Inc., closed the massive distribution center in September 2009, more than a year after it announced plans to consolidate work at a new warehouse it was building in Brookville, Ohio. The move cost 120 workers at the Huntington warehouse their jobs.

For the three-plus years it was empty, the Stride Rite warehouse was probably the biggest property on the market in a 50- or 60-mile radius, said Steven Zacher of Zacher Co./CORFAC International, who along with John Adams represented the building's seller.

The former Stride Rite warehouse was a good logistical fit for DIY's services to Weaver, Foster said. Most of the operation will be devoted to warehouse and distribution, but some limited packaging may be done on a seasonal basis.

About one-third of the distribution center will not be needed for Weaver and may be used by DIY for other clients.

DIY has been providing warehouse, distribution and packaging services to clients since its founding in 1983. "We started out packing parts for General Motors, then made the transition to retail," Foster said.

One of the company's first retail clients



IMAGE TAKEN FROM WEB

was the Walt Disney Co. It also handles product and packaging services for 3M and Masterpiece Puzzles, among others. "We serve a lot of retailers," Foster said.

Weaver Popcorn was founded by Ira Weaver in 1928. The family-owned business is headquartered in Noblesville. The company's flagship brand is Pop Weaver, but it also has produced popcorn products under the brand name Trail's End, which are sold for fundraising by the Boy Scouts of America.

Weaver's specially bred hybrid corn is grown in the U.S. and Argentina. In terms of production, the company grows about 30 percent of the total amount of popcorn produced worldwide, second only to ConAgra Foods.

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