



Moriah Town Supervisor Thomas Scozzafava (right) is congratulated by Sherman V. Allen Inc. President Daniel Dukeshire for his work helping locate a Mac's Market in Port Henry
Staff Photo/Lohr McKinstry

Mac's Market readies for Port Henry

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- Closing on former Tops in Port Henry

set for next week

By LOHR MCKINSTRY

PORT HENRY — The way is clear for a Mac's Market to open here a year after the community's only grocery store closed.

Sherman V. Allen Inc., the parent company to the Mac's Markets regional chain, will purchase the former Tops Friendly Markets building in Port Henry on Jan. 15.

After that, it's a rush to do interior renovations, hire and train workers and stock shelves for a mid-March opening.

That news excited some people at a public hearing hosted by the Essex County Industrial Development Agency on giving tax breaks to the store.

"A lot of people in Crown Point and Ticonderoga are looking forward to this (opening), too," Moriah Town Councilman Paul Salerno said. "When would we be buying our first groceries?"

Dukeshire said they're getting quotes now from contractors for renovation work.

"We've got to start hiring the people, doing some training. I'd like to be open the middle of March."

He said Mac's has been hopeful that people from surrounding communities would patronize the store.

"We're excited about that. We'd like to bring in a little wider radius" of customers.

Sherman V. Allen Inc. is buying the former Tops building for \$850,000 from New Jersey-based Eton Centers and Brause Realty of New York City. The 24,000-square-foot building, on a 1.4-acre site, was assessed at \$791,800.

The payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement will give the new owners a 50-percent tax reduction the first year of a 10-year abatement. The PILOT will decline by 5 percent each year until the property is back to a full-value assessment.

No one at the public hearing spoke against the arrangement, which must now be approved by the Village of

Port Henry, Town of Moriah, Essex County and Moriah Central School District.

Moriah resident Delores "Lutz" Burhart said having a grocery store is important to the community.

"I think we should move full speed ahead. Everyone stands to gain by having a grocery store."

Tops closed in March 2006, and although small chains like Save-A-Lot considered locating in the vacant store, nothing happened until Mac's came on the scene.

The Mac's Market in Port Henry would be the firm's eighth store, with others in Vermont and New Hampshire.

Sherman V. Allen Inc. is based in Rutland, Vt.

Dukeshire praised Moriah Town Supervisor Thomas Scozzafava for helping bring the store to Port Henry.

"I know first-hand being without a grocery store for almost a year has many hardships," Scozzafava said.

"We as a community cannot afford not to have this building unoccupied. Mac's is the only company willing to make a substantial contribution to the community. They will actually own this building."

Port Henry Village Mayor Ruth McDonough thanked IDA Co-Directors Jody Olcott and Carol Calabrese for their work in getting Mac's in Port Henry.

"We appreciate their efforts on behalf of the community. We (the Village Board) offer our unconditional support to Sherman Allen to do business in New York state."

Moriah Town Councilman Richard Carpenter said the Moriah Chamber of Commerce is publicly supporting the store, and "we believe Mac's Markets will enhance the quality of life in Port Henry."

Dukeshire said the Port Henry Mac's Market will sell a complete selection of grocery items, including local breads and baked goods, and will carry a full assortment of national brands.

"I think it's a pretty good blend. We've been working on this for a long time."