

Packaging company is expanding its

Granite City facility

Move will bring more jobs to the area

BY MICHAEL HEIL

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The expansion of the Gateway Packaging Company along the Illinois Route 3 corridor will bring about 55 jobs to Granite City, as well as the newest technology in the packaging industry.

The east section of the current Gateway facility is being expanded into a 33,000-square-foot metal building for the operation of press machines and bag-making equipment.

The new machinery, which will be coming from Europe, will cost more than \$2 million. The total cost of the project will be about \$10 million.

Korte Construction of Highland is handling the expansion. Work began at 20 Northgate Industrial Drive began about two weeks ago and is set for completion in late January.

Gateway makes packaging for various food products and industrial goods, among other items.

On Monday, Gateway Packaging President Roger

Miller, Granite City Mayor Ed Hagnauer, Korte Construction Chairman Ralph Korte and Chamber of Commerce of Southwestern Madison County Executive Director Rosemarie Brown took part in a groundbreaking ceremony for the expansion project. Other company employees and officials from the area joined them.

"We believe we have a bright future in Granite City," Miller said. "We have a great environment in Granite City to continue to grow a successful business as part of a global economy. We started our song and dance without a lot of money (and are growing) from a small business to a (large) company. We are planning for the future by upgrading our equipment and technology on a regular basis."

"I want to congratulate you and hope you remain here for a long time," Hagnauer said to Gateway officials. "This is a major expansion. If you combine it with the bio-diesel industry (that's coming to Granite City) on the Route 3 Corridor, you add \$40 to \$50 million to the area and new jobs that are not



MICHAEL HEIL PHOTO

A groundbreaking ceremony was held Monday at Gateway Packaging Company in Granite City for the building's expansion. The expansion will include the newest equipment in the packaging industry. Attending the event were (from left) Granite City Mayor Ed Hagnauer; Ralph Korte, chairman of Korte Construction; Roger Miller, president of the Gateway Packaging Company; Miller's wife, Bekki; and Rosemarie Brown, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce of Southwestern Madison County.

steel related."

Hagnauer said he has had discussions with Miller about expanding the Route 3 Corridor tax increment financing district to include Gateway's expansion.

"We can't figure out why this whole area isn't part of the TIF anyway," Hagnauer said.

"(The TIF district) would help with our overhead costs," Miller said. "This is a huge project with a big price tag."

Miller started Gateway Packaging in 1982. In 1991, he had a 20,000-square-foot build-

ing constructed at Northgate Industrial Drive for additional presses and other machinery. Eight years later, the company grew significantly as it started producing pet food bags.

Gateway earns more than \$50 million annually and has another packaging business in Kansas City, which it acquired in 2001 as part of the company's overall narrow-web and wide-web printing operations.

The company has more than 250 employees and more than 100 customers throughout the world that purchase packaging for pet and human food products as well as chemical and medical products.