

Weis Markets to buy Doylestown Genuardi's

By Crissa Shoemaker DeBree Staff writer | Posted: Tuesday, February 14, 2012 3:00 am

Weis Markets, the Sunbury, Pa.-based supermarket company, announced Monday that it has agreed to buy the Genuardi's market in Doylestown.

The store will be the first for Weis in Bucks County. Its closest locations are Coopersburg, in Lehigh County, and Pennsburg and Upper Gwynedd in Montgomery County.

Weis will also purchase two other Genuardi's markets, in Conshohocken and Norristown. All three stores will continue operating as Genuardi's until the sale is completed.

Weis, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, operates 161 stores in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, New York and West Virginia and employs about 18,000 people.

"We're extremely pleased to be adding these stores to our store base," Weis Markets' President and CEO David J. Hepfinger said in a statement. "We look forward to serving these communities as the lead local merchant as we have in 33 counties throughout Central, Eastern and Northeastern Pennsylvania."

Employees at the affected stores will be encouraged to apply for positions at Weis, Hepfinger said.

Financial terms of the deal weren't disclosed.

Weis spokesman Dennis Curtin said the company had been looking for a site in Doylestown for the past four years. Weis is also "very early" in the process of studying another Bucks County location, on Routes 113 and 313 in Bedminster, for a supermarket and gas station.

"When the Genuardi's opportunity came our way, we were very interested — and were fortunate to be successful in securing this location," Curtin said in an email.

Weis' announcement comes a month after Genuardi's parent, Safeway Inc., said it would sell the regional grocery store chain and exit the Philadelphia market. Giant agreed to purchase 16 stores, including those in Newtown Township, Middletown, Lower Moreland, New Britain Township, Warwick, Abington and Upper Gwynedd. The Safeway-Giant deal is still pending regulatory approval.

The Doylestown store is one of eight that Safeway said it would sell to other operators. It also plans to close three other stores -- in Exton, Royersford and another location in Norristown.

Robert Gorland, vice president in the Harrisburg office of supermarket consulting firm Matthew P. Casey & Associates, said Weis is a strong, competitively priced chain that could do well in its new markets.

"It should be a slow sales movement upwards for them, because there is strong competition," he said. "But they are a good operator with strong store conditions, extended hours and competitive pricing."

In Doylestown, Weis will be in direct competition with Acme, which has a well-established location in an adjacent shopping center, as well as Giant and Redner's, which both have stores within a few miles.

Curtin said Weis prides itself on offering value and locally sourced products to its customers. Weis purchases more than 24 million pounds of local produce each year, processes its own milk and ice cream and gets eggs and meats from Pennsylvania sources.

"We work hard to offer local products that customers in individual markets want — we're not a one-size-fits-all merchant," Curtin said. "If there are local products that are a customer favorite, we will stock it. That's what we do in our other markets and it's what we plan to do in Doylestown. As a regional supermarket, we have the flexibility to do this, and we can do it quickly."