



Sunday News/Jeff Ruppenthal

Salvage and demolition workers are dwarfed by the massive abandoned Agway plant in Manheim, which is slated to become a rubber recycling business.

## Former Manheim feed plant site to be retreaded for rubber recycling

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A long-abandoned Manheim industrial complex has gotten a new lease on life.

The former Agway feed plant on West Stiegel Street, which has stood empty since 1992, is slated to be turned into a rubber recycling business. Developer W. Edwin Miller and businessman Moses B. Glick, of Pro-Glick Co., bought the 150,000-square-foot property for an undisclosed price in December and will oversee the conversion, which is expected to take place over the next several years and cost around \$1 million by the time cleanup and renovations are complete.

The old plant, comprised of 19 buildings over two large blocks, will be reduced to 30,000 square feet, requiring the demolition of 11 buildings, Miller said. Some of the plant's existing features, such as large storage silos and several pieces of vintage

equipment, will be adapted for use in the new business.

Miller said the project makes ideal use of the complex, which has been called an eyesore and a safety hazard by Manheim officials and residents for years. At one point, Miller, president of Pro Development Co., a commercial and residential real estate development firm, had plans to ask local officials to rezone the site for residential use.

"We originally presented a proposal to the Manheim Economic Development Task Force to put in 42 town houses back in June 1996," Miller said. The task force is an advisory group to the Manheim Borough Planning Commission.

"We went through two scenarios," Miller said. "One was all-residential, the other was to do a hybrid of commercial and residential (development). The task force wanted to maintain the site for industrial use, so we went back to the drawing board."

Miller met Glick, owner of

Conestoga Industrial Salvage Corp., in 1997 when Glick's firm was contracted to do demolition and salvage work on the plant. Glick expressed an interest in buying the property, and suggested his idea for a rubber recycling business.

"It sounded like an excellent solution," Miller said. "It gave the borough what it was looking for and enabled us to clean up the site and salvage some of the equipment."

"We did not want to lose one of the few sites in Manheim that's zoned for industrial use," said Manheim Mayor Donald Keener, explaining the borough's preference. Of the present project, the mayor stated that "Some kind of business going in there is a positive."

"Our industrial base is not what it once was," agreed Manheim Borough Council President Thomas Showers. "We're trying to reuse the sites we do have."

The plant, which may employ up to 30 employees in the future, will be set up for the recycling of "crumb rub-

ber," derived from shredded tires. In the first phase of the project, the tires would be shredded off-site, Miller said.

The crumb rubber would then be shipped to the plant in one-ton bulk bags, and used in the production of rubber hexagonal paving blocks suitable for sidewalks or playgrounds.

Future plans could call for the plant to have its own on-site shredding facility, Miller said. Some of the existing Agway equipment, including several vintage cleaning machines from the 1940s, could be used in this process.

In addition to demolition and salvage work, Pro-Glick is working with Terra Environmental Corp., Malvern, on clean-up efforts at the long dormant plant, Miller said.

"We're in this for the long haul," Miller said, noting that it could take a decade or more to have the operation running at full capacity. "It doesn't happen overnight. But you expect difficulties and challenges."