



Lloyd Smucker discusses the Smucker Co. move to Lancaster City, at a news conference this morning.

Smucker Co. sees rapid growth in city's Keystone Opportunity Zone.

By JOHN M. SPIDALIERE, New Era Staff Writer

With tax incentives too good to pass up, and a large pool of potential employees that live withing walking distance, Lloyd Smucker said it wasn't a tough decision to move the family business into Lancaster City's Keystone Opportunity Zone.

This morning, city officials welcomed Smucker Co. staff at the future location of the company's proposed 12,000-square-foot office and warehouse on Seymour Street.

Smucker Co., a commercial wall and ceiling contractor; plans to break ground on a \$3.1 million facility here this autumn.

The commercial wall and ceiling contractor currently employs 135 workers, and expects to hire 40 new employees after it opens the new facility next spring.

"We're planning for growth," said

Smucker, the company president.

He said the firm is growing at a rate of 20 percent per year for the last eight years, with posted sales for 2003 at \$13 million. The company is projecting sales of \$21 million this year.

Smucker purchased two lots in the KOZ, with an option on a third, for \$270,000. The company is moving from its 6,000-square-foot offices at 2445 Old Philadelphia Pike, Smokestown.

The firm plans to double in size. Smucker announced plans today for a 5,000-square-foot office and 7,000 square-foot warehouse.

The average wage for experienced Smucker workers is \$19.36 per hour, Smucker said.

Among its current projects are the Bright Side Baptist Church Opportunities Center and expansions at Lancaster General Hospital, York Hospital, Harrisburg Area Community College's Lancaster Campus and the Harrisburg International Airport terminal.

Smucker said when he first heard about the KOZ last year, he called the City Councilman Gene Duncan to tour the site. Duncan said he gave the city's pitch, but Smucker didn't need much convincing.

The KOZ offers local and state tax breaks. And some 70 percent of the county's unemployed live within a one mile radius of the KOZ.

"We need space to grow," said Smucker. "The KOZ made good business sense."