

Bulk Barn headquarters sets "new standard" for business



By Brock Weir

As a business you can never let your guard down while continuing to move forward, says Bulk Barn president Craig Ofield, but in moving forward sometimes answers can be found close to home.

An area resident since 1995, Mr. Ofield says Bulk Barn was looking for a piece of property that suited their future needs and, as luck would have it, the Town of Aurora "worked wonderfully" with them to make their dreams of a consolidated headquarters a reality.

Ofield was joined by Mayor Geoffrey Dawe and Richmond Hill Deputy Mayor Vito Spatafora on Friday morning as they cut the ceremonial ribbon on Bulk Barn's new headquarters on Don Hillock Drive.

The new facility, which brings together their business operations, as well as their warehouse and distribution facilities all under one roof, brings 350 new jobs to the community with 29 openings still available, and a further 25 on the horizon for 2015.

"We consolidated three different distribution facilities into one, so logistically we will be able to execute [business] a lot better and we will be able to service all of our stores," said Mr. Ofield. "We grow at about a 10 per cent rate per year. Next year we will have 255 stores and we're very controlled in our growth. We look for opportunities as they arise and as the population grows we will continue to look in York Region and across Canada."

Bulk Barn approached the Town of Aurora looking for expansion opportunities, according to Mayor Geoffrey Dawe and, in particular, a piece of land that would not only be substantial in size, but also visible from Highway 404.

"This was certainly a natural piece to look at," said Mayor Dawe. "We committed to Bulk Barn that we would fit within a very narrow timeframe to meet their building guidelines, and our staff really pulled together and did a tremendous job in terms of organizing and making sure things got done."

"It is a spectacular facility. I have had the opportunity to travel all over North America and this is probably the nicest head office I have ever seen, [and] it is indicative of the kind of employer Bulk Barn is, the facilities they provide their employees, the way they treat their employees, and it is a great draw for Aurora."

From the perspective of the Region of York, it is important to stress it is important to do everything possible to ensure corporations not only stay in the community, but also come into the community, according to Councillor Spatafora, and, in Bulk Barn, they had a meeting of the minds.

?I think the relocation speaks volumes for the company and the company's commitment to the community,? he said, noting the facilities he and Mayor Dawe took in on a tour of the facility, such as gym space. ?That is something I think is worthy of a note because it is a company that is responsive to their employees. It is not just about the bottom line, but how to keep their employees happy and healthy. It is a company that just sets the standard and the bar high for other employers to follow.?