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King Kullen moving in

BY PETER C. MASTROSIMONE

King Kullen is coming back. The supermarket is moving into Swezey's space in East Setauket's Three Village Plaza, bringing direct competition to the doorstep of neighboring Stop&Shop.

"This is an exciting development for both King Kullen and the Three Village community," said Tom Cullen, King Kullen's vice president of government and industry relations. "Long Islanders were disappointed when they learned in September that Swezey's

— a Long Island institution — would be closing its five department stores. However, now the Swezey's in East Setauket will be replaced by another family-operated Long Island retailer."

"The store will be the same size as Swezey's, so it's not going to change anything as far as the existing stores," said Lloyd Singer, a spokesman with King Kullen's public relations firm, Epoch 5 Marketing. The Swezey's space totals approximately 40,000 square feet while Stop&Shop's store occupies 47,000 square feet.

Singer could not say when King Kullen will open but did say it will employ roughly 150 people.

Stop&Shop welcomes the competition across the parking lot,

**'In terms of the
consumer, the
more the merrier.'**

— GARY LEWI
STOP&SHOP
SPOKESMAN

King Kullen

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"We always welcome competition. It makes us stronger. It's the nature of the free-market economy."

"In many instances across Long Island, it is not unusual to find competing supermarkets next door to each other," said Cullen, whose store is recognized as the oldest supermarket in the United States. "It's a sign of a healthy marketplace."

Community leaders said they are glad to hear of King Kullen's plans.

"Obviously we're happy to see that an anchor store is coming in to replace another anchor," said Bill Schaub, president of the Civic Association of the Setaukets. "We would hope it will help to support the mom and pop shops by attracting more clientele into the shopping center."

"Filling the retail space is good for the community," agreed Bob Brown, president of the Three Village Chamber of Commerce. "If it is a strong, new presentation, which I assume it will be, it'll help the other stores that are there and help fill in the vacant stores."

Brown and Schaub both said they are confident the community can provide enough revenue for Stop&Shop, King Kullen and Wild by Nature — a King Kullen subsidiary — all at once. Schaub recalled being told that the Setauket Stop&Shop was at one time the company's most profitable store per square foot. "Given that as a premise, yes we would be able to support all three supermarkets," he said.

Brown pointed out that large retailers like King Kullen conduct exhaustive market studies before deciding where

according to the supermarket's spokesman, Gary Lewi of the Rubenstein Associates public relations firm.

"In terms of the consumer, the more the merrier," Lewi said.

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to locate a store and said the company would not be moving in if it were not sure of success.

"You have two stores of the same size, basically," Brown said. "Competition is healthy. I don't think it's a battle of who's going to win out. It'll help the consumer, and both businesses will flourish."

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