



As Seen In

Newsday

Saturday, July 28, 2012

LI BUSINESS

New plant for East End products

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A \$10-million project in Baiting Hollow seeks to improve the bottom line for vegetable farmers, wineries and fishermen on the East End.

Lt. Gov. Robert J. Duffy joined business people and local leaders Friday to establish the Agriculture Enterprise Park in a 108,000-square-foot building on Sound Avenue. The structure had been home

to Blackman Plumbing Supply Co.

The park will be a center for cooling and packaging vegetables, storing wine and distributing products to grocery stores, farmers' markets and other retailers. It's a collaboration between J. Kings, a Holtsville-based food distributor, and area farmers.

"I've wanted to create an agricultural enterprise terminal for years . . . to take the best farm products, package them and

make them ready for sale," said John King, head of J. Kings, which employs 385 people.

He plans to move a Bay Shore vegetable-processing operation to Baiting Hollow, allowing for expansion of his Crazy Cooks Kitchen line of prepared meals. He expects to add 60 people to his payroll.

The Long Island Farm Bureau and Long Island Wine Council will each offer product storage space in the building for members. A \$500,000 grant

from Empire State Development Corp. will aid this effort.

The farm bureau's Joe Gergela said, "The ability to chill vegetables and cold storage for wine will increase shelf life and open new markets to our farmers." He also said fishermen could avail themselves of the park.

State Sen. Kenneth LaValle (R-Port Jefferson) said the enterprise park has been talked about for decades but "it took J. Kings to make it happen."

newsday.com NEWSDAY, SATURDAY, JULY 28, 2012