



New Owners Revitalize Shopping Center In Bamberg

Investment Will Include Opening of New Grocery Store

October 30, 2019

At a news conference held by SouthernCarolina Alliance and local community leaders, The Vireo Group announced today that their regional retail investment and development company has purchased and will further develop The Heritage Shopping in Bamberg, South Carolina.



Clay Boardman, Managing Partner of The Vireo Group, was joined by Chuck Fogle of Fogle's, Inc., who announced that he would open a Piggly Wiggly grocery store at the revitalized shopping center.

"We at the Vireo Group are very excited to enter the Bamberg market," said Boardman. "We are particularly happy to partner with the Fogle's to bring a grocery store back to this community. A grocery store is essential to serve your food needs and it also serves as a community hub where you see your neighbors and friends."

"We are going to extensively remodel the store and offer a large selection of quality products: grocery, meat, produce, and a deli/bakery," added Fogle. "I want to thank John, Clay, and Todd with the Vireo Group for their investment in Bamberg and their confidence in Fogle's Piggly Wiggly. I promise we will do our very best to earn your business on every visit."

"We are thrilled to announce the investment by The Vireo Group in the purchase and upgrade of The Heritage Shopping Center in Bamberg," said SouthernCarolina Alliance President Danny Black, whose nonprofit economic development organization recruited the first developers who built the shopping center over twenty years ago. "It has been a pleasure to work with Clay Boardman and his team, and we appreciate Chuck Fogle's investment in opening a Piggly Wiggly grocery store in Bamberg. Mr. Fogle's reputation is the highest, and he is a well respected business owner in the region. We are fortunate to have him creating more than 50 jobs in Bamberg."

Mayor Nancy Foster of Bamberg added, "Each of the 50 to 60 jobs created by Mr. Fogle will bring a better opportunity to a family in the Bamberg area. This might not be the largest Piggly Wiggly in the country, but I can assure you that it will be the most appreciated and the most beloved. Bamberg is big on the Pig!"

The new Piggly Wiggly, to be owned and operated by Fogle's, Inc., will be the sixth grocery store for the family-owned company and the only one operating in the small town of Bamberg, where Bi-Lo closed the town's only grocery store when the grocery chain filed bankruptcy last year.

"We are very excited to welcome a new grocer and developer to Bamberg County. I am proud of the County, SCA, and the city of Bamberg for working together to make this project a reality. This collaboration was definitely a labor of love for the citizens of Bamberg," said Trent Kinard, Bamberg County Council Chairman.

Bamberg County Councilwoman Sharon Hammond, who represents District 2 where The Heritage Shopping Center and new grocery store are located, thanked the city, county, developers and economic development team for their efforts, saying, "A grocery store is a community center. It's where we shop for our meals, greet our neighbors and meet others. It is also a provider of jobs, and we appreciate the 60 jobs that Mr. Fogle's Piggly Wiggly will create. We are going to shop locally and support this grocery store."

More than 170 Bamberg residents attended the press conference to cheer on the announcement and hear the news firsthand.

"Bamberg County worked closely with Bamberg City Council, Mayor Foster, Danny Black and Southern Carolina Alliance to bring a new grocery store to Bamberg," stated Joey Preston, Bamberg County Administrator. "We are proud to have been actively involved in recruiting the developer and store owner to the City of Bamberg. The county is thrilled to welcome a new grocery store to Bamberg and we encourage our citizens to support this store to ensure its long-term success."

SC Representative Justin Bamberg, who resides in Bamberg, thanked the entire team involved and expressed his support of the project. SCA President and CEO Danny Black explained that Rep. Justin Bamberg and Senator Brad Hutto had assisted in infrastructure funding related to the project, presenting the two legislators with Piggly Wiggly hats at the press conference.

"This project demonstrates the success that happens through collaboration, and it means so much to the community. We appreciate Mr. Fogle, Mr. Boardman, the county, city and Southern Carolina Alliance," said Representative Bamberg. "We will continue to assist in any way that we can in community and economic development in Bamberg County."

Clay Boardman of The Vireo Group commented that while he had attended many grand openings, he had never seen such a large crowd at one, "and we're not even opening yet!"

Mr. Fogle noted that he anticipated the store would take three months to get ready for opening.

After the press conference, the crowd enjoyed refreshments and received reusable shopping bags emblazoned with, "Getting' Jiggy with the Piggy" and t-shirts printed with the Piggly Wiggly logo and "Bamberg is Big on the Pig."