

Pierre's Ice Cream Co. gets unanimous approval for \$6 million expansion from Cleveland Planning Commission

By **Janet Cho, The Plain Dealer**
September 04, 2009, 11:22AM



Plain Dealer file

Denita Hollimon oversees the machines churning out containers of Pierre's French Vanilla Ice Cream, the company's best-selling flavor, in this 2007 photo. Pierre's current Euclid Avenue factory can make 14,000 gallons of ice cream a day, but the company hopes to grow even bigger.

- **Pierre's Ice Cream Co. wants to expand Cleveland operations**

CLEVELAND - **Pierre's Ice Cream Co.** got a unanimous thumbs-up from the **City Planning Commission** this morning on its \$6 million proposal to build another 35,540-square-foot production and storage facility on its Midtown Cleveland campus.

The addition, which would be attached to the current headquarters and warehouse at 6200 Euclid Ave., would house high-tech ice cream-making equipment, storage rooms for ingredients such as sugar, cream and chocolate chips, and an automated flash-freeze hardening chamber to freeze the ice cream for shipping or storage, according to Tyler Garrett of designer **Ray Fogg Building Methods Inc.**

"We're happy we have the green light on the overall design. We greatly appreciate all of the support that has been forthcoming from the City of Cleveland," said Shelley Roth, president and chief executive of Pierre's, in a statement.

"We hope we can continue to overcome any hurdles so we can make this a reality for the company, our customers and the community."

The new building would replace the current 1920s-era factory on Carnegie Avenue that predates the 77-year-old Pierre's.

"The city is delighted they've decided to make this investment in the city at this time," said Tracey Nichols, director of economic development.

She said Pierre's needs the new blast chiller and other equipment to nearly double its current production capacity and better compete with other ice cream companies, especially those based in the South where wages are lower.

And while Pierre's makes more than 235 varieties of ice cream, sherbet, frozen yogurt, sorbet and novelties, it can only churn out a certain amount at a time.

Nichols said the city is also hoping that with this growth, the company will prosper and eventually hire more workers beyond its current 104.

When Commission member Lillian Kuri invited Pierre's to put up a large sign in front of the new building, others chimed in that it could be a huge neon sign with an animated hand scooping out ice cream.

"We think a lot of the company," said Chairman Anthony Coyne.

Kuri said Roth told her she really needs a more energy-efficient facility, because the current one requires an unbelievable amount of kilowatts to make and store ice cream.

At Thursday's **Euclid Corridor Design Review Committee** meeting, all but one person approved the plans, asking only for more landscaping when the building is finished.