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Packaging specialist expands in Streetsboro after growth

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Expansion needs at Automated Packaging Systems Inc. of Streetsboro have taken off the market the largest empty industrial building in the Portage County town.



A maker of packaging machinery and provider of packaging materials, Automated Packaging bought the hulking, 173,000-square-foot building at 600 Mondial Parkway from Playtex Manufacturing Inc. of Westport, Conn., for \$5.23 million Feb. 16, according to Portage County land records.

Daryl Manzetti, Automated Packaging's chief financial officer, said the company has experienced "a significant amount of growth the past three years" and needs the added space.

"We've expanded globally and are up against it in terms of capacity," Mr. Manzetti said.

Mr. Manzetti said air pouches and mailbags are growing product lines for Automated Packaging, and the new plant would make those products as well as others the company is developing.

"This is a big deal for us," Mr. Manzetti said of buying the building. "We committed to the state that we would create 85 jobs in the first three years. But we see it as a 10-year project. By the end of that time, we will have invested \$47 million in the plant and have 200 to 250 jobs there."

The state of Ohio last December approved a 45% Job Creation Tax Credit for seven years for

the project, which includes buying the building and equipment to operate it. The state estimates the incentive will save the company a total of \$224,000, but it requires Automated Packaging to operate in the building at least 10 years.

Jeffrey Pritchard, Streetsboro city planning, zoning and economic development director, said he was pleased the company acquired the building from Playtex, which had marketed it for more than three years.

"I feel we're blessed," Mr. Pritchard said.

The former Playtex building would serve as Automated Packaging's third plant in Streetsboro. Mr. Manzetti said when the new plant goes into production, it will be Automated Packaging's largest factory under a single roof. The company operates five plants, including one in the United Kingdom.

Online real estate ads say the property at 600 Mondial originally hit the market in 2008 with an asking price of \$8.15 million. However, Terry Coyne, a Grubb & Ellis Co. senior vice president who represented Playtex in the sale, said the original price reflected the hot industrial market before the recession struck.

"We got the price we wanted," Mr. Coyne said.

The building dates from 1995 and sits on 32 acres, Mr. Coyne said.