

Maryland firm buys Palmer Township shopping center



Jon Harris
Contact Reporter
Of The Morning Call

The shopping center that Redner's Warehouse Market calls home in Palmer Township has changed hands.

But don't worry, the grocery chain isn't going anywhere.



Chesapeake Real Estate Group has purchased the shopping center on Nicholas Street in Palmer Township that is anchored by a Redner's.

Chesapeake Real Estate Group of Maryland announced Friday that it, along with its financing partner Cicero Capital Partners, has acquired the Palmer Super Center, a 100,272-square-foot retail center at 3725 Nicholas Street. The previous owner was 3725 Nicholas Street Holdings Limited Partnership.

According to Northampton County property records, Chesapeake purchased the center for \$6 million on Feb. 3. That, combined with an auction fee, closing costs and immediate renovations, brings the total investment to more than \$7.5 million, the company said.

The center, which was renovated in 2001, is about 85 percent leased, Chesapeake said. It is anchored by Redner's, which is under a long-term lease, and the center has six other tenants, including the Hibachi Grill & Century Buffet and Marinelli's Pizza.

There are four spaces, totaling 15,000 square feet, and one or two pad sites available for lease, Chesapeake said.

The company said in a news release it plans to "completely renovate the center to improve its aesthetics and increase leasing velocity."

Redner's spokesman Eric White said the ownership change doesn't affect the grocery chain's continued presence in that retail center. "That store shows great numbers," White said. "We do very well in that community."

Jim Lighthizer, founder and owner of Chesapeake Real Estate Group, said Redner's long-term lease as the center's anchor tenant was appealing to his firm.

"We purchased Palmer Super Center below replacement cost ... and are in the position to add significant value with the addition of new retail uses," he said in a news release. "Our team is extremely familiar with the dynamics of the Lehigh Valley region, and believe the area has every fundamental, including strong business drivers, to sustain consumer growth."

This is Chesapeake's second asset in Pennsylvania. Lighthizer said the company's other property is a 400-acre business park in Franklin County.