

City looking to fill Reser's building

Written by Nancy Spencer
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DELPHOS — Another business leaving Delphos was announced on Monday. Quick on the heels of the announcement of the ALCO store closure in August came the news Reser's Fine Foods will close in September.

While still figuring out what the ramifications of the retail store's closure will be, city officials are now looking at nearly \$1 million dollars a year in lost revenue in utilities for Reser's as well as income tax losses.

"We had no insight with regards to Reser's leaving," Safety Service Director Greg Berquist said. "We met with the plant manager several times last year and they were bringing in another line and more people at that time."

Berquist said the loss of Reser's will only add to the city's budget woes.

"With a municipality this small, it is hard to lose that much revenue and recover," he said.

When Orval Kent and parent company Chef Solutions Inc. filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in October 2011, the city was left with a \$500,000 unpaid utility bill.

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"We did go to court and file our claim but municipalities are just another debtor in bankruptcy court," Berquist said. "They offered us a \$1,200 settlement so we absorbed that loss. Municipalities are not debt-protected."

As soon as Berquist heard the news on Monday, he contacted Regional Growth Partners of Northwest Ohio, the Van Wert County Economic Development Advisory Board, the Northwest Ohio Regional Economic Development and the Lima Economic Development Board so news of the soon-to-be vacant facility could be spread.

"We had just had someone inquiring about a food-processing facility about three weeks ago so hopefully they are still looking," Berquist said. "We are just waiting on Reser's to give us the specs on the building and the asking price."

"We can take on another food-processing customer. We've got the information out there and now we're competing with every other municipality in the Midwest to fill the facility."

Mayor Michael Gallmeier said city officials will be looking carefully at the 2014 Budget.

"There are going to be cuts and rate increases," he said. "How else can you make up a million dollars? There's not a lot of fluff in the budget now. We've been cutting and cutting for the last five years to get by."