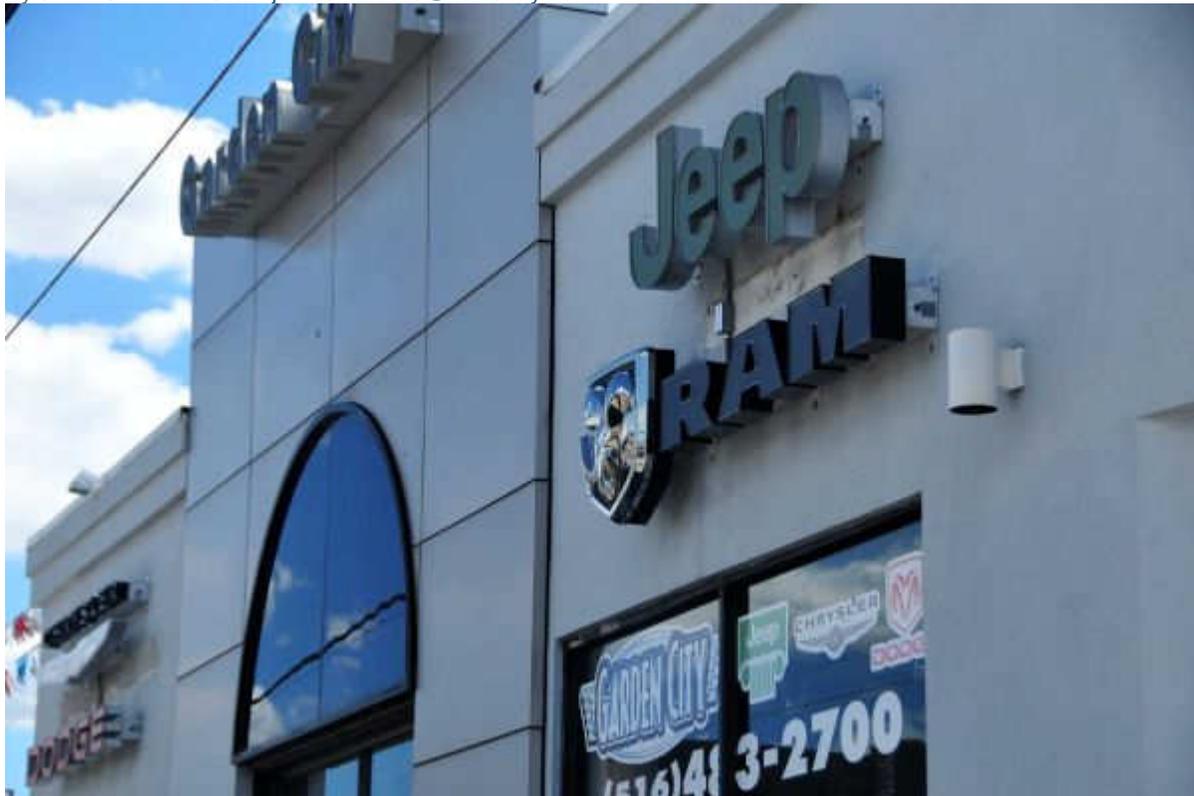


Garden City Jeep Chrysler dealership to get tax breaks

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By JAMES T. MADORE james.madore@newsday.com



An automobile dealership is to receive tax breaks from Nassau County for an upgrade required by Chrysler, officials said.

Garden City Jeep Chrysler Dodge Ram plans to expand its showroom, service area and parts department, all located on North Franklin Street in Hempstead Village.

The \$3.4-million project includes a 10,000-square-foot addition connecting two existing structures. "Joining them together will provide more abilities to do work," said Alan M. Stein, the dealership's attorney.

He also said Garden City Jeep would add 13 jobs to its payroll of 74 over the next six years.

Records show that employees earn, on average, \$56,000 per year.

To support the expansion, the county's industrial development agency agreed last week to provide a sales tax exemption of up to \$150,000 on construction materials, furniture and other supplies, and \$25,000 off the mortgage recording tax. Also, the dealership's property tax rate will be frozen for three years at the current level and then increase 2 percent in each of the next nine years.

LOOPHOLE IN THE LAW

Similar incentives were granted a year ago to Bical Chevrolet, of Valley Stream, by the Nassau IDA. In both instances, county officials used a loophole to get around a 2013 state law that bars retailers from getting such tax breaks. The law was adopted at the behest of Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo.

Joseph J. Kearney, the IDA's executive director, said Garden City Jeep merits government help because it's located in an economically depressed area and will attract buyers from outside of Long Island, particularly from New York City.

He also said, "if they weren't able to do this project, they would be forced to go out of business" because their right to sell Chrysler vehicles would be rescinded.

Ralph Kisiel, a spokesman for the automaker, said "discussions are confidential" between it and Garden City Jeep. But he said, "in general, Chrysler Group expects all of our dealerships to be compliant with our facility and branding plans."

Kearney, the IDA chief, also said that county government is dependent on sales tax revenue, and "car dealerships generate enormous amounts of sales tax revenue."

Hempstead Mayor Wayne J. Hall said the village endorses the project "because it will retain and create much-needed jobs in our area."

Separately, a self-storage business secured county backing last week for the conversion of a Garden City warehouse.

Men on the Move Storage, of Floral Park, plans to double the size of the 50,000-square-foot building near the Meadowbrook State Parkway by creating a second floor within the existing structure.

The \$10.4-million project would create three jobs that pay between \$32,000 and \$42,000, records show.

In return, the Nassau IDA offered a \$100,000 sales-tax exemption and \$61,635 off the mortgage recording tax. The property tax rate would be frozen for five years followed by 1.66-percent increases in each of the next five years and 2-percent increases in the final five years.

The county has supported self-storage projects from other companies in Hicksville and Elmont. And Men on the Move received tax breaks for its facility in Glen Cove from that city's IDA, according to company attorney Chris J. Coschignano.