



A community celebration honoring the grand opening of a Potbelly Sandwich Shop in the recently completed 111th Street Gateway Retail Center was the occasion for residents to celebrate the renaissance of Pullman and thank Benefit Chicago and others whose confidence and investment in the community has made positive change possible.

At an event attended by Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Alderman Anthony Beale, and scores of corporate and community leaders, David Doig, president of site-developer CNI, spoke about the importance of access to capital to making the Retail Center and the opening of the community's first sit-down restaurant possible.



"The \$2 million loan approved last May helped CNI finally realize this long-held dream of so many residents and allowed us to bring the amenities and services to Pullman that many communities take for granted," said Doig. He added that while part of the loan funds received were used to complete construction financing, other funds are likely to be used by local entrepreneurs to finance growing neighborhood businesses among which are Laine's Bake Shop and Star Cleaners – both of which will open within the new retail center early in 2018.

The Gateway Retail Center is the latest example of the more than \$250 million that has flowed into Pullman over the last five years, creating 1,100 new jobs.

Prior to Gateway CNI developed the Pullman Park shopping center, which, anchored by a 150,000 square foot Walmart, includes Planet Fitness, Ross Dress for Less and Advocate Health Care. Immediately to the west of the site is the Pullman Industrial Park, where Method Home Products established its first U.S. factory and where Gotham Greens has built the world's largest commercial rooftop greenhouse producing 10 million tons of lettuce each year.

In early 2018, these two iconic brands were joined by Whole Foods, when the company opened a 140,000 square foot Midwest Distribution Center with another 150 jobs. For residents the new stores and manufacturing facilities are an immense source of pride in a community that has fought to remake itself in the shadow of the former steel mills.

Are there lessons to be learned from Pullman? Mayor Emanuel thinks so. Speaking at ribbon-cutting, he said: "The Gateway Retail Center is the latest milestone in the ongoing renaissance of Pullman. By investing in our neighborhoods, we are creating new economic opportunities for residents and ensuring that Chicago is the best big city in America."

