

New Jersey Q & A: **Victor Paulius**

Creating Jobs in 2 Lands, Simultaneously



Dith Pran/The New York Times

Victor Paulius, a developer, at the Port Carteret site he is expanding as part of a project with the Lithuanian Government.

By CHARLES JACOBS

VICTOR PAULIUS has a plan to create badly needed jobs for the two lands to which he owes allegiance. Born in Lithuania, Mr. Paulius, a Bergen County developer, has built an international construction and engineering company in Allendale since locating in New Jersey, where he gained his American citizenship.

Like so many other businesses in the state, V. Paulius & Associates has been forced by the recession to lay off a large segment of its work force. When he was asked by the Lithuanian Government to assist in building the newly liberated nation's economy, Mr. Paulius saw this as an opportunity to expand the employment base both there and in New Jersey.

Under his guidance, the Lithuanian Parliament used the New Jersey enterprise zone concept and the free trade zone in Mount Olive as models to legislate a free trade zone in the port town of Klaipeda. Mr. Paulius was asked to be the prime developer of a commercial park there and was given a 99-year lease on 2,500 acres of undeveloped land.

Mr. Paulius's largest industrial development in New Jersey is Port Carteret, from where he intends to ship much of the locally produced materials required for his overseas construction plans. He is in the process of expanding storage space, dock and transportation capabilities at the site to handle the increased load he anticipates.

Outside the state, the Paulius company has developed commercial parks in New York State, Ohio, Georgia and Canada.

It has also constructed residential communities in New Jersey and elsewhere, the largest of which is the 322-unit Garret Heights development, which overlooks the New York skyline from atop scenic Garret Mountain in Paterson.

The Paulius family resides in Allendale. Before his move to New Jer-

A developer's project would aid the Lithuanian and New Jersey economies.

sey, Mr. Paulius lived in Canada for 10 years after fleeing his homeland in 1948 at the age of 18.

After arriving in the United States, Mr. Paulius began working at Mahoney-Troast, one of the state's largest contractors. In 1966, he left to found his own company, which currently employs a staff of 103. Before the recession, the Paulius payroll totaled 250 people.

During his years in Canada, Mr. Paulius received a bachelor's degree in engineering from McGill University. He now holds a master's in civil engineering from New York University.

He and his wife, Brone, have two sons, both of whom have joined the family business, and a daughter. She and her husband recently moved to the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius to establish an office there.

Q. What benefits will this development create for New Jersey?

A. The state needs an infusion of manufacturing jobs. Lithuania needs finished products like roofing materials, copper tubing, windows and various other building materials. It is much cheaper to produce them here and ship them overseas than to buy them on the European market, and that is exactly what I plan to do as I construct the port. All the materials will be shipped to Port Carteret or through Port Elizabeth.

Q. How will jobs be created in the state?

A. In addition to an expanded employment base in manufacturing, manpower is needed to handle and transport these materials, and that means jobs. Trucking, dockside loading, warehousing are all key factors in moving the goods. There will also be construction jobs, as we expand our Carteret facilities, and I will have to use local people with construction and administrative expertise as consultants at Port Klaipeda. At present, the Lithuanians do not have that expertise.

Q. Have any New Jersey companies shown an interest in this project?

A. We now have two representatives contacting firms statewide. In addition to producers of construction material, we are reaching out to the pharmaceutical industry, fast-food organizations, computer makers, farm equipment manufacturers and even the many apparel companies in New Jersey. We are also talking with major retailers who are in a position to supply the over-the-counter goods Lithuania desperately needs.

I am not at liberty to reveal names at this time, but we have experienced substantial interest because this opens an easily accessible market to many of these firms.

In addition, under the Federal Overseas Private Investment Corporation, we are now able to guarantee insurance protection for up to 90 percent of a company's physical investment overseas, and that has generated great interest.

Q. What kind of cooperation, if any, do you need and are getting from the state government?

A. We have already opened discussions with Department of Commerce Commissioner Barbara McConnell. While nothing has been firmed up, we are seeking her help in making New Jersey businesses aware of what we are doing, and possibly cooperating on a trade mission to Lithuania, which that Government assures me

they will cooperate in organizing and financing.

Q. Why was Port Klaipeda selected?

A. It offers one of the only deep-water ports in this area of Europe that never freezes. Because of its central location on the Continent, it is an ideal distribution point to all of Europe and Russia.

Q. Are you currently building in New Jersey?

A. In addition to the expansion of Port Carteret, we are also launching a new commercial development alongside Route 46 in Totowa. Our Garret Heights has completed stage 2, and we are now planning out a high-rise third stage that will include both residential and commercial space.

Q. How do you view the New Jersey economy?

A. Really, I am most concerned about the national deficit. That directly impacts the ability of lending institutions, including those in New Jersey, to provide money for new development. It disturbs me that we are becoming more of a service society, which means we are losing better-paying manufacturing jobs. We have to stop depleting our industrial base because we are losing too many good jobs. Until the deficit is addressed, that decline will undoubtedly continue. First we have to stabilize the debt obligations of our Government, and then think of growth.

Q. How does that affect your Lithuanian proposal?

A. I am not concerned about the ability of larger corporations to participate, for they are usually well capitalized and have some means of raising the money they need for expansion. My concern is the impact on smaller new firms that need financing to start up. These other firms that produce the specialized materials that a nation like Lithuania needs, and they are also primary sources for the parts for larger manufacturers. ■