

NEWS

SHARED KITCHEN OPENING IN LYNN THIS MONTH

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Peter Mikedis shows Mayor Jared Nicholson and EDIC/Lynn Executive Director James Cowdell the space on Sanderson Avenue that will be used for a shared commercial kitchen. (EDIC/Lynn)

LYNN — Peter Mikedis is no stranger to the food business in Lynn, having owned and operated Sidekim Foods on Sanderson Avenue from 2008-17. After “retiring” for a few years he and his sons, Christopher and Andrew, started making non-perishable, packaged meals geared for emergency situations, such as natural disasters, and other uses such as home-delivered, pre-cooked meals.

Mikedis calls their Redi-Pax meals “like MREs (meals ready to eat), except nicer.” Clients include the U.S. Forest Service (for those fighting forest fires), municipalities as far away as California, and individual states including Massachusetts, Maine, and Virginia (for nonprofits such as Meals on Wheels). One box includes three days’ worth of complete meals for two people.

The demand for these emergency meals has increased in the last few years, with Mikedis’ company producing tens of thousands at his Middleton warehouse. That led to people asking if he would consider getting back into the fresh-food business. He and his sons decided it would be a worthwhile venture and they started looking for space.

Mikedis thought he had a site in Woburn, but it fell through. His real estate broker told him there was space available in a very familiar location: 82 Sanderson Ave., Lynn.

“It was three days before the 15th anniversary of our opening Sidekim Foods in that building (Feb. 4, 2008),” said Mikedis, a Lynn native who has lived in Saugus for 20 years.

EDIC/Lynn Executive Director James Cowdell and Mayor Jared C. Nicholson were pleased to hear that Mikedis was considering coming back to the city.

“When I called him, Jim said, ‘Tell me you’re going to do something in Lynn,’” Mikedis said. EDIC provided a loan that Mikedis used to purchase equipment in order to get his new business, Fresh Packs, which provides healthy and pre-cooked meals, up and running. Within a month, they were producing about 1,000 meals a day.



From left, Andrew Mikedis, Christopher Mikedis, Peter Mikedis, Mayor Jared C. Nicholson and EDIC/Lynn Executive Director Jim Cowdell in the space that will be used for a shared commercial kitchen. (EDIC/Lynn)

Mikedis started with four employees – all Lynn residents – and expects to have 15-20 by the end of the year.

Mikedis quickly discovered that 5,500 square feet is significantly more space than he needs and came up with the idea of creating a shared commercial kitchen, in which cooks and caterers who have outgrown their current space can access space and equipment, including prep tables, refrigerators, freezers, ovens, and fryolators.

“Everything is at their fingertips, without having to make the investment in all the equipment,” Mikedis said. “This is for people looking to expand, or manufacturers trying to launch a product line, or caterers just starting out who need space, storage, refrigeration, access to a convection oven. They can cook four times the amount of food in the same amount of time, compared to working out of their home kitchen.”

The shared kitchen is scheduled to open this month. Cooks can rent the space for an hourly rate month-to-month, or sign on for a six-month commitment that includes a discounted rate and mentorship from Mikedis in the areas of procurement, operations, sales, and go-to market methods.

“I’m from Lynn and this was a great opportunity to come back,” he said.

The mayor and Cowdell are happy to have him.

“The shared-kitchen concept is an exciting development that helps those looking to expand their food-service business without requiring a significant capital investment,” Nicholson said. “It is another example of Lynn being a welcoming city that provides opportunity for those looking to better themselves.”

“Peter Mikedis has been an asset to the Lynn business community before and he will be again,” Cowdell said. “This is an innovative idea that will enhance the prospects of many other small businesses and we are happy to support it.”

The shared commercial kitchen is approved by the Health Department.

“We are finding that there is a great need for this type of space,” said Mikedis, who hopes to work with the city and School Department to provide meals for Lynn schools.

“Jim and the mayor have been so positive right from the start,” he said. “They know we will do our best to hire people from Lynn and we put our employees first. We have amazing workers and we want to help them succeed.”

“This concept is very important and aligned with what’s happening elsewhere,” said Ward 3 Councilor Coco Alinsug. “Small businesses and entrepreneurs can produce food in compliance with regulatory requirements without needing to invest in their own facility during a stage when capital and cash flow are a challenge. This is perfect for a city like ours where there is an influx of new residents and cultures.”