

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUNBURY – A former textile mill will be donated to a regional economic development group. Glen Raven, Inc. owner of Sunbury Textile Mills, announced today that it will donate the building to DRIVE, an economic development entity serving five counties in the central Susquehanna region. Additionally, two vacant parcels will be donated to the City of Sunbury.

“Ceasing operations in the Sunbury plant was not an easy decision for Glen Raven. It was important to all of us that we support our associates and the city through this transition, and donating the facility to encourage new job creation and economic growth was one way for us to accomplish that goal,” said Brian Burke, director of operations at Glen Raven.

Glen Raven announced in June 2020 that it would be closing the Sunbury Textile plant as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. A task force consisting of Burke, city administrator Jody Ocker, Lauren Bryson of Focus Central Pennsylvania, and Rep. Lynda Culver began marketing the site and looking at potential opportunities.

“This facility has such a rich history. We all knew it could continue to be an asset for the region, but it was going to take a dedicated team to find new, innovative uses for this unique building. Given its experience in revitalizing industrial sites, DRIVE seemed like the perfect choice for Glen Raven,” said Rep. Culver.

“Projects like Sunbury Textile are a key component of DRIVE’s mission,” said Executive Director Jennifer Wakeman. “Assembling a team of partners, as we did here, to breathe new life into buildings like this is at the core of DRIVE’s identity. This is who we are. It’s what we do.”

More than 20 acres of property adjacent to the Sunbury Textile building will be donated to the city. “While it’s difficult to see them leave Sunbury, we’re grateful that Glen Raven recognized the value of those parcels to our community,” said City Administrator Jody Ocker. “Our fire department has utilized the land as a training area for years and is looking into improvements that will expand training capabilities.”

The task force has fielded numerous inquiries from companies interested in all or part of the 400,000 square foot building. “It seems unlikely that a single entity will want the entire building,” said Wakeman. “We’re open to leasing or selling portions of it if that’s what it takes. Our goal is for this facility to be an economic driver in the City of Sunbury.”

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Glen Raven, a 140 year old global textile manufacturer, bought Sunbury Textile in 2017. The facility was closed in September due to reduced demand amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Glen Raven continues textile operations in several facilities around the world.

DRIVE is an economic development council of governments serving Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, Snyder, and Union Counties. Established in 2015, DRIVE provides professional staff for project development, business retention and expansion, and site selection services. It also serves as a forum for communication and coordination of economic development activity among its member counties.