

## Truck City of Gary to truck across town

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GARY || Truck City of Gary plans to move from its dealership west of Gary/Chicago International Airport in late January to a new state-of-the art facility at 25th Avenue and Taft Street.

The move is the result of months of negotiations between the truck dealership, the airport and the City of Gary. The airport is buying the dealership's current facility on West Chicago Avenue to make way for airport expansion.

"We achieved our No. 1 goal, which was to keep a business that has operated for 61 years in Gary in Gary," Truck City General Manager Gerri Davis told the Gary airport authority at its meeting Thursday.

Truck City will invest \$5.5 million in the new dealership and repair facility, which will be located just north of the Borman Expressway. It will be built by Larson-Danielson Construction Co., of La Porte.

Davis is hoping it can be opened by Jan. 21, which would have been the 100th birthday of her grandfather and Truck City founder the late Paul G. Davis.

"We at the airport were happy to be able to work with the city of Gary and Truck City to facilitate the airport expansion," said Airport Director Chris Curry. "And Truck City has been a good steward all through this process."

The airport authority on Thursday approved paying Truck City \$820,000 for its current location on West Chicago Avenue. In addition, the authority approved spending up to \$60,000 if necessary to resolve liens there.

The authority will reimburse relocation expenses of up to \$420,000 for Truck City. Authority lawyer Patrick Lyp said federal regulations require the airport to pay relocation expenses for businesses displaced by the airport's expansion.

The airport is buying parcels west of the airport in order to lengthen its main runway to 8,900 feet from 7,000 feet.

Truck City employs 75 technicians, salespeople and others, Davis said. It plans to add 20 employees to the payroll at its new facility.

Truck City is the oldest dealer of Freightliner Trucks in the United States and also sells Sterling and Western Star Trucks.

It opened in 1946 at the corner of 5th Avenue and Chase Street. It moved to the current location on West Chicago Avenue in 1960.

Davis admitted to some nervousness when she was first approached by the airport and city officials about moving.

"You always get nervous when the government comes in and says, 'We want your land.' But everyone was wonderful, -- the mayor, the airport director -- everyone was very straight up with

us."