

MAP International expanding campus

Ground-breaking ceremony for new building and grounds slated for Friday

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Since 1985, employees of MAP International have quietly gone about their tasks on the outskirts of Brunswick.

Located in a modest but adequate building at 2200 Glyngo Parkway, MAP International goes unnoticed by many. So much so, a part of the Golden Isles population is unaware that the international non-profit relief organization even exists.

"I think some people know we're here, but most people probably don't," said Michael Nyenhuis, president of the organization. "Or they know we're here but don't really know what we do."

After this week, all that may change.

A ground-breaking ceremony will be held Friday at 4700 Glyngo Parkway, the 17-acre site slated to be MAP International's new home.

A far cry from the current location's simple appearance, the new facility will be shiny and bright. It will even have a lake out front.

"I think this might make us a bit more high profile," Nyenhuis said, adding that being above the radar is not a bad thing, but it's also not the goal of the organization.

Plans for the new building began in October, when the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center bought the current MAP building for \$4.2 million to expand the FLETC campus. That has allowed MAP to expand its campus, Nyenhuis said.

While there's nothing wrong with MAP's current



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MAP International president Michael Nyenhuis in MAP's Brunswick warehouse at the volunteer packaging area for Travel Packs, boxes of medicine volunteer doctors take to other countries.

building, Nyenhuis saw the sale as a golden opportunity.

Nyenhuis and the organization will remain where they are until the new headquarters is built.

"I loved this old building," he said. "It's been really great for us. But it just made sense for us to do this move now."

Throughout the past six months, MAP has been working with Randall-Paulson Architecture firm in Roswell

to draw up a blueprint for the new building. If all goes as planned, dirt will start moving in April "and we'll be in our new home by October," he said.

With more office and warehouse space - the warehouse will be 4,000 square feet and the office 1,500 square feet - the new facility will be able to accommodate the non-profit's growing needs, said Nyenhuis.

Last year, the group shipped \$380 million in medicines and medical products to 135 countries around the globe.

"After 22 years, we have become a different organization," he said. "We will be able to do technological upgrades in our warehouse and in other areas. We've been given this amazing opportunity to grow and expand, and we're taking it."

The new building will also be LEED certified, meaning it will be energy efficient and environmentally friendly. Obtaining the certificate was a vital point for the structure and reflective of the organization's core mission.

"We work in the health field and see how irresponsible building negatively effects a community's health," he said. "Also we, as Christians, are stewards of the Earth. Having a building that represents who we are is a very important part of our identity."

Founded in Chicago in 1954, MAP International is a Christian-based medical aid organization that ships pharmaceuticals to developing countries. The non-profit group moved its headquarters from Chicago to Brunswick in 1985 for easier access to shipping routes and to create a more organized flow path.