

# Pease's going on display

*Confectioner to show  
how candy is made*

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STAFF WRITER

The general public hasn't gotten an inside peek at the making of Pease's Candy for a decade, but that will change this fall, when the Springfield confectioner opens its first downtown store.

Pease's Candy plans to open in mid-October on the ground floor of the Washington Building at Sixth and Washington streets.

Employees will be hand-dipping chocolates, making fudge and coating caramel apples in full view of the street traffic.

"We're setting up our candy kitchen so people on the street or in the store can watch the candy being made," co-owner Rob Flesher said. "It's a really fun product to watch. We can finally show people what we do."

Just don't expect a song-and-dance number, similar to what goes on at The Fudgery at St. Louis's Union Station.

"I can guarantee you I won't be singing and dancing," Flesher said. "That won't sell our product."

The business has been approved for a \$100,000 low-interest loan through the state treasurer's office because it will create a minimum of four full-time and 10 part-time jobs.

Amy Werner, interim executive director of Downtown Springfield Inc., said the business would be a nice addition to downtown.

"Anytime you can add an entertainment factor to a feel-good factor like buying candy, it just adds to the experience," she said.

Pease's Candy is the first tenant to claim space in the Washington Building, which is undergoing a \$1.8 million renovation that stripped the 1963 structure to its beams.

Pease's will occupy the entire ground floor, except for a lobby area that will provide access to the upper floors.

The building's black glass panels were removed this spring. They are being replaced with a brick and stucco-like exterior to help the building blend in with its turn-of-the-century neighbors and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

That placement played a large role in enticing Pease's.

"If people are coming to do the (presidential) museum, they're probably also going to visit the Old State Capitol and the Lincoln-Herndon law office. They have to walk right by our front door," Flesher said. "And we're going to have some candy cooking, fun smells coming out of there. We hope to play a big role in the downtown."

The store is the local candy company's fifth location. It will be the only retail outlet, however, where candy is made on the premises. Most production, including all the automated chocolate dipping machines, will remain at the company factory in Industrial Park South.

In addition to candies and roasted nuts, the downtown store will serve specialty drinks, hand-dipped ice cream and desserts.

Pease's was founded in 1918 by Flesher's uncle, Martin "Noonie" Pease, who got his start selling the confections from his living room.

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