



GOOD EATS: Gary Cha, who owns this Yes! Organic Market at 658 Pennsylvania Ave. NE and three others in D.C., is opening a new one at 4100 Georgia Ave. NW.

RETAIL

Entrepreneur to open his 5th organic grocery store

By Erin Killian
Staff Reporter

Gary Cha plans to open his fifth Yes! Organic Market grocery store.

Cha has signed a letter of intent to buy an 11,000-square-foot, ground-floor space in Neighborhood Development Co.'s 72-unit affordable-housing apartment building at 4100 Georgia Ave. NW.

"We have floor plans all drawn up," Cha says. "They've already been submitted and a

bunch of the work has been done. It's not a done deal, but I hope it's going to be a done deal soon."

Yes! Organic Market will be at the intersection of Georgia and Taylor avenues, north of Columbia Heights in an area with few grocery stores.

There's a Safeway three blocks south and another organic grocery store, called Everlasting Life, 14 blocks south.

"When we started initial discussions with Yes! and various community organizations, the response was truly overwhelming," says Juan Powell, co-CEO of Neighborhood Development Co.

The store won't open for at least two years, depending on permits and construction. The Neighborhood Development Co. plans to break ground this summer on the apartment building. It's slated to open in the fall of 2008.

Cha, who owns four other Yes! Organic Market stores in D.C. neighborhoods, is cautious about giving out financial information on the business he bought in 1988.

"This world is not a perfect world, and there's a lot of jealous people," he says, referring to the possibility of people going after his money.

It's not cheap to build a grocery store.

According to most recent numbers released by the Food Marketing Institute, the typical food retailer in the U.S. invested \$6.5 million to build a store, or \$146.70 per square foot, in 2005.

That's up from \$5.5 million and \$124.86 per square foot the previous year.

Cha opened his most recent store in November in 8,000 square feet that was formerly a Safeway store on 12th Street NW in Brookland.

He says he's been overwhelmed with the community response.

"It's nice to be wanted rather than being pushed out or having protesters demonstrate," Cha says, although he adds that his stores have never been picketed.

With a large stable of customers who want Yes! Organic in their neighborhoods — including Cleveland Park, Adams Morgan and Capitol Hill — Cha has been able to build a strong business, especially in the dense areas with lots of housing.

When plans are finally realized for Yes! Organic Market, Cha might have more residents to sell to on Georgia Avenue.

A 156-unit condominium project, called Park Place, is under construction on top of the Georgia Avenue/Petworth Metro station. In addition, 322 apartments going up in Howard Town Center.

The Neighborhood Development Co. also plans a 100-unit condominium on the south side of Georgia Avenue and Lamont Street, across from the 38-unit Lamont Street Lofts, where the company owns a parcel.

Powell says the newest project is in the development phase.

"We're incredibly bullish on the Georgia Avenue corridor," Powell says. "We'd like the opportunity to really both improve the quality of the neighborhood and bring more quality retail to the corridor."

E-MAIL: EKILLIAN@BIZJOURNALS.COM PHONE: 703/258-0833

Trusted with America's Heritage... as well as its Future.

The nation's Capital and the surrounding area is home to some of America's most historic buildings, the next generation of biotech research facilities, and much more.

From governmental facilities to Fortune 500® companies to Universities, we build, power, service, and protect some of the most sophisticated—and treasured—structures and facilities systems ever imagined.

EMCOR. The Ultimate Washington Insider.

EMCOR Serving The D.C. Area

DYNALECTRIC COMPANY
Pan Hurt, President & CEO
Electrical Services

S.A. COMUNALE, INC.
Steve Comunale, President & CEO
Fire Protection

POOLE & KENT - NORTH
Adam Shavely, President & CEO
Mechanical Services

EMCOR FACILITIES SERVICES
Paul Asmar, Vice President
Site-based Facilities Services

EMCOR SERVICES COMBUSTIONEER
Joe Dub, President
Mechanical Services

EMCOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES
Mike Shelton, Vice President & General Manager
Government Facilities Solutions

DUFFY MECHANICAL CORPORATION
Sam P. Duffy, President
Mechanical Services



What can we do for you?

CALL: 866.890.7794 (US & Canada) EMAIL: emcor_info@emcor.net VISIT: www.emcorgroup.com