

Entrepreneur sees future at Akron Fulton airport



LINDSAY SEMPLE/Akron Beacon Journal photos

The view from the back of the terminal building at Akron Fulton International Airport includes the Airdock and excavating equipment. Local entrepreneur Randy Theken's companies have purchased and are refurbishing the former terminal.

Ex-terminal being restored

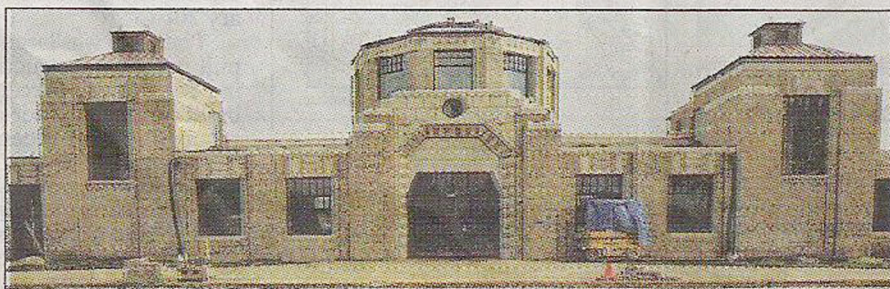
Building that housed restaurant could become companies' new home

By Mike Rasor
and Courtney Blowers
Beacon Journal business writers

Local entrepreneur Randy Theken's companies have purchased and are refurbishing the terminal building at the Akron Fulton International Airport.

The former home of Cafe Piscitelli is being restored to its original luster. Final plans for the building remain in flux, Theken said Thursday.

Theken's four companies include Theken Spine LLC, Theken Orthopaedic and Theken Disc, all of Akron, and Therics of Princeton, N.J.



Construction is under way Thursday at the Akron Fulton airport's terminal building.

Theken Disc is developing a product that the company said could bring in \$100 million in sales by 2010.

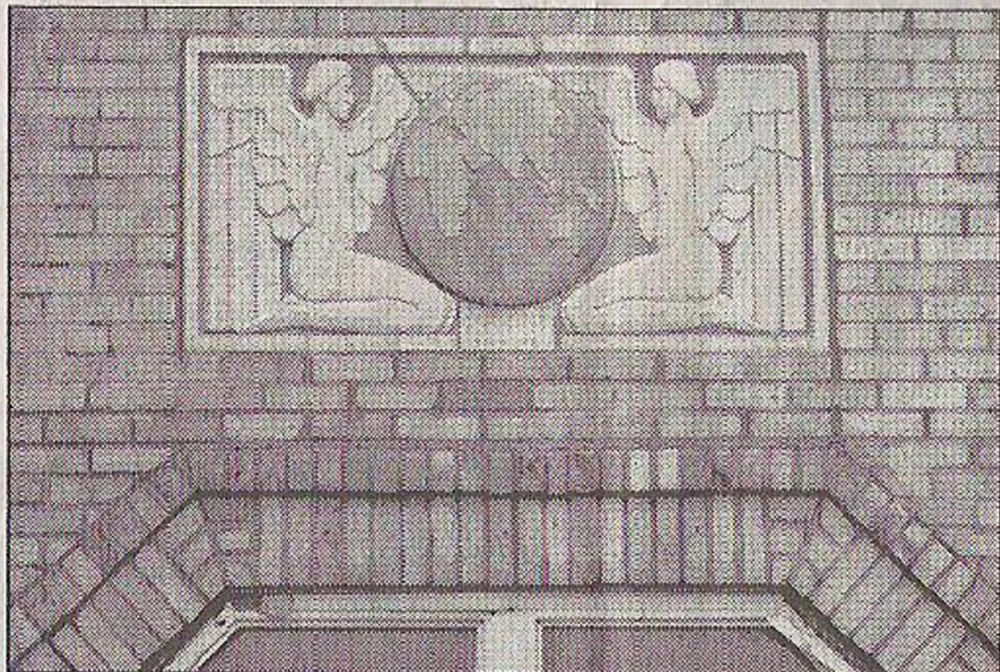
Theken's companies employ about 50 people, most of whom research and design spinal technology.

The companies in Akron have out-

grown their headquarters on East Waterloo Road, said Rachael Smith, director of marketing communications.

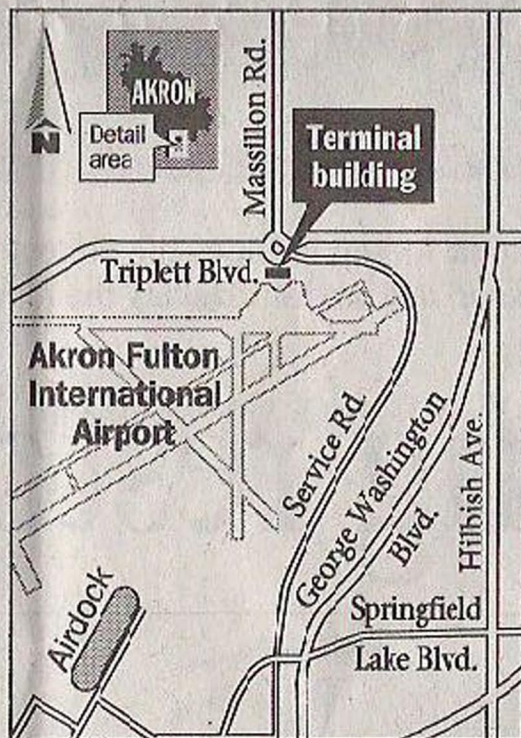
"We had tremendous growth last year and are continuing on the same pace this year," Smith said.

Please see Terminal, D2



LINDSAY SEMPLE/Akron Beacon Journal

The terminal building at Akron Fulton International Airport includes many ornate details. It once housed Cafe Piscitelli.



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Terminal

Location makes it easy for doctors to come, go

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It is possible those facilities could move to the airport once construction is complete, perhaps later this year, Randy Theken said.

Smith said she did not know how much the private company is spending on the building, which opened in 1931.

Italian restaurant Cafe Piscitelli occupied the space since

1983. It closed in late August.

The company likes the airport location because it will make it easy for doctors to come and go, said Robert Y. Bowman, Akron's deputy mayor for economic development.

The Theken companies hope to grow quickly once the new product, the eDisc, gains government approval in the next four years, said Rick Navarro, vice president for research and development at Theken Disc. The eDisc is a prosthetic spinal disk with a computer for wireless data transmission.

The product is the focus of Theken Disc and has the potential to bring in between \$50 million and \$100 million, Navarro

said.

In 1992, Randy Theken used his research at the University of Akron to found Theken Orthopaedic, a firm that tests medical devices. Six years later, he started Theken Spine LLC to focus on developing products of his own, such as spinal implants.

The business moved to East Waterloo Road in 2002 when it outgrew a different office.

Theken Disc received \$5.5 million from Northeast Ohio investors in 2003 to get the eDisc started.

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