

Tax breaks for \$3M move to Suffolk

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A building maintenance company with customers across the country will move its headquarters from Nassau County to Suffolk County, thanks to tax breaks from the latter, executives said recently.

Commercial Building Maintenance Corp., or CBM, plans to purchase a 21,000-square-foot facility at 129 Oser Ave. in Hauppauge. The project will allow the company to consolidate its Syosset headquarters and an equipment lot in Plain-

view into the one location in Suffolk.

The \$3 million project was awarded \$122,441 in tax breaks from the Suffolk County Industrial Development Agency last month. The largest savings will be \$92,900 off its property taxes over 10 years, or a 27.5 percent reduction.

CBM president David Parsons said the company needs more office space because it recently won more contracts on the East Coast, including some PNC Bank locations. It provides services including cleaning, landscaping, snow re-

moval, security and painting, among others.

“We have made serious consideration of moving our corporate headquarters to New Jersey,” where CBM recently bought another company, he said. “We’ve also looked at a number of properties in Nassau, as well as 129 Oser Ave. in Hauppauge, which would suit our needs very well.”

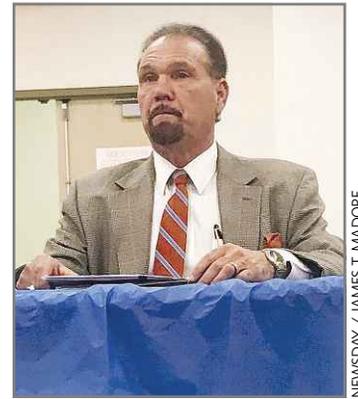
In return for the tax breaks, CBM would move 212 jobs from Nassau to Suffolk and add 34 jobs within two years. Records show its employees are paid, on average, \$30,100

per year.

Parsons told last month’s IDA board meeting that CBM started with window cleaning in the 1970s.

CBM was first headquartered in Lindenhurst, but it moved to Syosset in the 1990s after acquiring several other companies. It now has annual sales of more than \$30 million and offices in Manhattan, Boston, San Francisco, Tampa, Florida and Washington.

“Since 2011 we have gone national, with service locations from coast to coast,” Parsons said.



David Parsons, president of a building-maintenance business

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NYC AMAZON GO ACCEPTING CASH

Amazon launched its high-tech Go convenience store a year ago, where shoppers can pull items off the shelf and walk out. Now it’s adding a decidedly low-tech feature: accepting cash.

Its new store that opened in New York City Tuesday is the first Amazon Go store to do so. At its other shops customers can only enter with an app that links to a credit card or an Amazon account.

The company, facing a backlash from those who believe cashless stores discriminate against the poor, confirmed last month it was working on a way to accept bills and coins.

In the new store, an employee will swipe those who want to pay by cash through the turnstile entrance. After shoppers grab what they want off the shelves, an employee will scan each item with a mobile device, take the cash, give customers their change and hand them a receipt. The store still won’t have cash registers.

Cameron Janes, who oversees Amazon’s stores, says the way it accepts cash could change in the future, but he declined to give details.

Philadelphia became the first city to ban cashless stores earlier this year, and New Jersey passed a statewide ban soon after. San Francisco will soon require brick-and-mortar retailers to take cash as payment, and a similar law is being considered in New York City.

The New York Go store, the first in the city, is in lower Manhattan at a high-end shopping mall and office complex that houses bank and credit card company offices. Amazon expects many of its customers to be workers looking to pick up a lunchtime salad or sandwich, people who live in the area or tourists visiting the nearby World Trade Center. — AP

Google updating AI assistant

The Associated Press

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. — Google announced updates for its artificially intelligent voice assistant and new privacy tools to give people more control over how they’re being tracked on the go or in their own home.

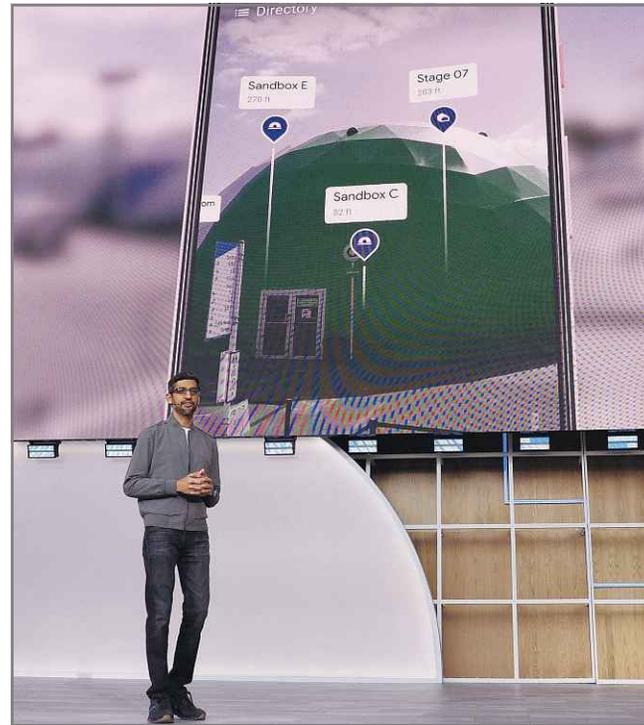
CEO Sundar Pichai kicked off the company’s annual developer conference Tuesday noting that the company wants to do more to stay ahead of “constantly evolving user expectations” on privacy.

In response to concerns about constant location tracking, the company will begin enabling users of its digital maps to cloak their identities to prevent their locations from being recorded.

The company is offering its new “Incognito” privacy control amid intensifying scrutiny over how much user information technology companies collect and sell for advertising. Facebook dedicated much of its conference last week to connecting people through more private channels rather than broadly on the social network.

Incognito mode has long been offered on various browsers, including Google’s Chrome, although signing in to a Google or other account generally negates it, at least partially.

Apple’s Safari and Mozilla’s Firefox browsers already have various privacy tools built in to block sites



CEO Sundar Pichai told developers Tuesday Google wants to do more on “evolving user expectations” on privacy.

JOHN G. MABANGLO/EPA-EFE/REX SHUTTERSTOCK

from tracking people’s online activity so they can sell ads based on their perceived interests and locations.

The latest version of Google’s Android operating system will also alert users when apps may be exploiting access to phone location data. A privacy control will remind users whenever an app that’s not currently in use accesses their location, and will allow users to turn that off.

Android Q, as the new oper-

ating system is known, will also let users restrict app access to location more generally — for instance, by limiting it to times the app is in use. Stephanie Cuthbertson, a senior director for Android, called location data “some of your most personal information” during her presentation on the subject.

Location data is a sore subject for Google. In 2018 an Associated Press investigation found that Google con-

tinued storing phone location data even when users turned off a “location history” setting in Android.

The company also said it would make it more clear to users what data are being collected by its Nest line of internet-connected home devices. And it showed off recently announced auto-delete features, which let people set a time limit for how long their location history will be saved before it is deleted.

Pichai also reiterated his intention to come up with more features to help make people’s lives easier. The pledge made Tuesday before a crowd of about 7,000 computer programmers at the conference known as I/O is part of Pichai’s efforts to diversify Google beyond its roots as a search engine.

Google’s voice assistant will get a series of updates, including one that lets it book rental cars and movie tickets using online forms on Android phones later this year.

The Google Assistant will also get shrunk down so that it can work directly on a phone, eliminating the need to communicate with Google’s cloud servers to understand some commands. The phone-only capability will be available on new Pixel phones later this year.

The AI is also learning to offer more personal suggestions to users by learning common contact names and addresses.