

Popular deli coming back

LINCOLN SQUARE | Meyer shop will be expanded, get new name

BY JANET RAUSA FULLER

Staff Reporter/jfuller@suntimes.com

Delicatessen Meyer, a fixture in Lincoln Square, shut its doors in late March because of unpaid bills.

Now, a Chicago family whose own deli has been around for 36 years is bringing it back to life.

The Luszczy family, proprietors of Gene's Sausage Shop in the Belmont-Cragin neighborhood, bought the property, which had been acquired by the U.S. Small Business Administration in a court-ordered sale.

They plan to expand and reopen the store by year's end, said Yolanda Luszczy, whose father, Gene, started the family's shop at 5330 W. Belmont. They will rename the shop Gene's but are looking into whether they can also work Deli Meyer into the



Delicatessen Meyer, shown in 2002, will be renamed Gene's and will sell German specialties. | RICH HEIN~SUN-TIMES

name.

They'll sell German specialties as well as other "old-world European" foodstuffs, including cabbage rolls, crepes and herring — all made in-house.

An 80-foot counter will hold smoked meats, a Gene's specialty, but, says Derek Luszczy, Yolanda's brother, "That's still not enough room for what we want to put there."

When Meyer's closed, Ald. Gene Schuler (47th) said he was "besieged by developers that wanted to knock it down. Other people wanted to put in

restaurants." But residents, by and large, told Schuler they wanted to save the deli.

The Luszczyes already were scouting out Lincoln Square to expand their business when the chance to buy the property arose.

The old shop's interior is currently being gutted. Passersby like Rafael Vazquez couldn't resist a peek inside the open doorway recently.

"This is memory lane," said Vazquez, whose German wife grew up in Lincoln Square.