

# Keata Pharma plant takeover bid saves 175 jobs

ARNPRIOR — Christmas arrived in town early this year for some workers at the Pfizer Inc. plant.

In a pre-Christmas dose of economic good news Toronto-based Keata Pharma Inc. announced last week it

will be taking over the local Pfizer Inc. plant where Viagra and other popular products are manufactured.

As part of the deal, Keata will continue to exclusively manufacture Pfizer products in the 85,000 sq.ft. facility

here for at least the next three years.

Keata Pharma Inc. also agreed to retain some 175 "highly skilled" plant workers as part of the deal.

The acquisition is expected to be finalized by Christmas

Eve, said plant manager John Carkner, who will stay on in the same capacity under the new owners.

The Pfizer business, along with that of two other major pharmaceutical clients, will see Keata supplying products

in 30 countries.

Carkner said the plant will have opportunities to go after custom manufacturing contracts that weren't possible under Pfizer's operation of the plant.

In the summer of 2006,

Pfizer announced it would close in 2008 unless it found a buyer to takeover the facility.

It said at the time it was not prepared to re-equip the plant and could conduct operations more economically elsewhere.