

Flower Foods introduces itself to the community

Plant to open in Spring 2009 with bread line

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Photo by Jenny Blandford

Photo by Lisa Tolliver

Flowers Foods hosted a luncheon Thursday at Bardstown Country Club to introduce community leaders to the company, which will open its bakery production plant in the spring.

Flowers Foods, which consists of 39 bakeries that produce breads, buns, rolls, snack cakes and pastries, acquired 30 acres of land in Nelson County Industrial Park in November 2007. Construction on the plant began in March and equipment will be installed next month. By January 2009, Flowers Foods hopes to have its management team in place, Senior Vice President for Flowers Bakeries Craig White said at the luncheon.

Headquartered in Thomasville, Ga., the company delivers fresh bakery foods to about 48 percent of the United States population in 25 states and the District of Columbia. The market reach is in the Southeast, Southwest and mid-Atlantic regions for fresh bakery products. All other products are available nationwide. Brands include Nature's Own, Cobblestone Mill, Mrs. Freshley's, Blue Bird Bakeries, Sunbeam, Bunny, Aunt Hattie's, Holsum and Butter Krust.

The bakery focuses on Direct Store Delivery (DSD). DSD distribution contributes for 81 percent while direct to customers' warehouses makes up the additional 19 percent. The DSD sales by category are: 59 percent branded retail, such as Kroger; 25 percent restaurants and institutionals, such as Olive Garden, Outback Steakhouse and Burger King; 13 percent non-branded retail; and 3 percent Flowers' thrift stores. Last year, Flowers Foods had \$2.04 billion in sales, according to its annual report.

The Bardstown location will be the farthest north central plant once it opens. White said Bardstown was chosen because it is strategically located, has access to transportation, has a strong labor force and for the community.

Robert Benton, vice president of manufacturing for Flowers Foods, said the Bardstown plant would begin with a bread production line. A bun line will be added in spring 2010. Once open, the bakery will employ 200. The bread line will produce 10,000 loaves per hour, or 14,000 pounds.

Careers at Flowers Foods will be posted on its Web site, www.flowersfoods.com, through classified advertisements and employment companies.

A tour of the Flowers Foods facility followed the luncheon.