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Christie Administration Program Offers Displaced Progresso Plant Workers New Job Opportunities

Thursday, August 10, 2017

Tags: [Jobs and the Economy](#)

Trenton, NJ — One week after Progresso Foods closed its Vineland plant, displacing 338 workers, Governor Chris Christie today announced that Cumberland County-based F&S Produce was approved for tax credits under the Grow New Jersey Program, enabling the manufacturer to relocate to the soon-to-be vacant Progresso Foods plant in Vineland, offering new employment opportunities for Progresso's former employees.

"Since we learned of the pending closure of the Progresso Foods plant, which had been a presence in South Jersey for decades employing hundreds of our residents, we have advocated for another company to utilize the facility and retain those employees," Governor Christie said. "F&S Produce not only will keep a major food processing operation at the site, but they plan to expand and increase the number of workers. This is an important step to ensuring a stable and growing economy in the southern part of the state."

Due to significant growth and increasing demand for its products, F&S Produce needed to expand. Through the efforts of the Christie Administration and Choose New Jersey, F & S, which evaluated new locations both within New Jersey and outside the state, decided to pursue the closed Progresso Foods Plant in Vineland.

F&S was approved for tax credits under the Grow New Jersey (Grow NJ) Program to encourage the manufacturer to relocate to the facility in Vineland. Advanced under the New Jersey Economic Opportunity Act (EOA), Grow NJ is the State's main job creation and retention incentive program and is administered by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA).

"This project exemplifies why Grow NJ was created - to drive growth in targeted industries and ensure the creation and retention of jobs in the state," said EDA Chief Executive Officer Melissa Orsen.

At its August Board meeting Tuesday, the EDA Board approved up to \$21.7 million in Grow NJ tax credits over ten years to support F&S' move to the W. Elmer Road facility, which would involve the creation of 60 new jobs, the retention of 380 jobs at risk of being relocated out of state, and private investment of nearly \$18.79 million.

F&S was originally approved for Grow NJ tax credits in January related to another facility in Cumberland County; however, the company was presented with the opportunity to consider the alternative site, which offers it several advantages. The new location satisfies its industrial manufacturing needs, will save approximately six months of time in bringing the new plant up to production levels, and offers twice the space as the original facility, allowing F & S space for future expansion. Its relocation to this site also will prevent the facility from going dark and provides opportunities for workers displaced from layoffs.

F&S was founded in 1986 as a processor of fresh cut and individually quick-frozen produce, as well as specialty prepared refrigerated foods and purees for retail, foodservice and industrial customers throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic region. The company was also considering a location in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

As a cornerstone of the Administration's economic development strategy, Governor Christie created the Partnership for Action as the hub for all economic development activity in New Jersey and is comprised of four interconnected and highly focused organizational elements: Choose New Jersey, The Business Action Center, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the EDA.

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