

Incentive deal prompts Nash Finch to expand rather than leave

Move saves 250 jobs, could lead to 60 more and \$10 million investment

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LIMA - Nash Finch Co. will expand its Bath Township operations, a county economic development official said Wednesday. Word of the expansion comes after county commissioners approved a tax incentive deal without which the company may have left, the official said.

Allen County commissioners approved a 10-year, 60 percent tax abatement that works out to nearly \$500,000 over the term of the agreement. The deal paves the way for a nearly \$11 million expansion project that will add about 70,000 square feet to the company's Bath Township site.

"It was a partnership effort led by our local community. I think this is very positive in this environment," said Marcel Wagner, president and chief executive of the Allen Economic Development Group. "From talking to their consultant, they're looking at these types of consolidations all around the country. We were just one of a number of initiatives they are going through."

Nash Finch, based in Minneapolis, is the second-largest publicly traded wholesale food distributor in the country, according to information on the company's Web site. The company purchased the local distribution center from Roundy's in early 2005.

No one from the local facility or at Nash Finch corporate headquarters was available Wednesday to discuss the expansion.

"One of the key points was this retains 250 jobs that are out there right now and will add another 60 jobs over the next 36 months," Wagner said. "They expect to start construction almost immediately and be finished in May 2010."

Wagner said local economic development and community leaders have been working for several months to put together the information for the deal. Company officials told local officials on Friday the company would accept the deal and expand here.