

Koch Foods plans Fairfield expansion

FAIRFIELD — Koch Foods is planning to double the size of its chicken processing and packaging plant in Fairfield.

The Chicago-based company plans to spend \$45 million on the project, which includes construction of a 179,000-square-foot addition to its 185,000-square-foot facility on Port Union Road, improvements to its existing plant, new machinery, equipment and inventory.

Employment is projected to increase 53 percent, from 730 employees today, to 1,120 within three years, according to documents filed with Fairfield.

“We’ve outgrown our facility,” plant manager Howard Tallen told Fairfield City Council members this week. “This expansion is very important to us.”

Clients for the 27-year-old company include Kroger, Walmart, Ruby Tuesday, Burger King and Sonic, said Chip Englert, controller.

“There is a lot of competition from other Koch facilities for jobs,” Englert said.

To facilitate the expansion, Fairfield City Council approved a community reinvestment area agreement, which now goes to the state for final approval, including additional state incentives. Under

the agreement, 75 percent of property taxes on the value of the expansion would be abated for 10 years, said Greg Kathman, economic development manager.

Koch would still pay full taxes on the value of the existing plant. The agreement also calls for the Fairfield Schools and Butler Tech to receive payments of \$42,600 and \$1,300, respectively, each year of the abatement.

The city would also provide Koch a rebate on administrative fees charged for wastewater from Koch to the Butler County Regional Wastewater System. Anything above \$80,000 annually would be rebated, up to a total of \$150,000.

“With 1,300 layoffs in the Butler County area, folks in this area need this kind of (job) opportunity,” said Councilman Adam Jones.

Fairfield officials said projects already announced will bring about 500 new jobs to Fairfield over the next three years.

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"I appreciate you guys creating jobs," said Councilman Jeff Holtegel. "Eighty percent of (the announced) job creations in the next three years will be from you."

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