Norwalk
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATI

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Huge Win for Huron County, City of Norwalk and New Horizons Baking Company – Rail Spur Development Project Awarded $220,000

NORWALK, OH (July 2, 2009) - At a time when Business Retention and Expansion efforts are more important than ever, and state grants and financing are not easy to come by, Huron County, the City of Norwalk and New Horizons Baking Company were big winners in the Ohio Department of Development's Industrial Site Improvement Fund award announcements on June 25.

Sheena Metzger of the Ohio Department of Development contacted the community on Friday and stated that Huron County's Norwalk Rail Spur Development Project was awarded $220,000 in grant funds and financing assistance from the State of Ohio and the Ohio Rail Development Commission.

The Norwalk Economic Development Corporation and Huron County Development Council worked together to secure this grant and financial assistance on behalf of Huron County, the Norwalk Rail Spur Development Project and New Horizons Baking Company.

Ellen Heinz, Director of Norwalk Economic Development Corporation, said these funds will enable New Horizons Baking Company to have one of their highest commodities transported in via rail, saving the company a great deal of money on logistics and providing them with the opportunity to make this additional long term investment in their Norwalk facility, benefiting the entire Huron County community. The grant and loan dollars complement the substantial financial match already committed to the project by New Horizons Baking Company.

"New Horizons Baking Company is very grateful for being awarded a total of $220,000 in Grant and funding assistance for the Norwalk Rail Spur Development Project," said Trina Bediako, Executive Vice President of New Horizons Baking Company. "Flour is the primary commodity used in our baking business. On average we use approximately 650,000 pounds per week. During these challenging economic times, it has become even clearer that we have to purchase and transport all of our production materials and ingredients in the most cost effective means possible.The completion of this project will allow us to be more competitive in our flour purchasing and to have better control of costs for transport and delivery of flour."

"We have been an active part of Huron County for over 40 years," she added. "To be blessed to continue to grow our business and provide employment in a supportive community with exceptional leadership is all an employer can ask for."

“I was extremely happy to hear of the state’s investment in this project and New Horizons Baking Company,” said Norwalk Mayor Sue Lesch. “We are so fortunate to have them here in Norwalk. I am impressed with their quality products, and their commitment to their employees and the community. And we are delighted to partner with them on this important project.”

The State of Ohio created the Industrial Site Improvement Fund, a pilot grant program initiated in 2004, to help invest in infrastructure growth in Ohio communities.

According to Heinz, county and city resources pulled together seamlessly to apply for this assistance.

As the Huron County Development Council did not yet have a new director in place, Council President Gary Mortus of Ohio Edison, Norwalk Economic Development Corporation Director Ellen Heinz and New Horizons Baking Company’s Operations Manager Mike Porter worked together with a very tight timeline to complete and submit Huron County’s application before the March 31 deadline. Director of Public Works Josh Snyder was also very instrumental in the process, as well as numerous others who contributed their time and efforts throughout the county. The Huron County Commissioners and Norwalk Mayor Sue Lesch were in full support of applying for the state funds, and were very responsive to the timing of the application.

Huron County Commissioner Gary Bauer was very glad to hear of the announcement and commented, “It’s great that we are getting help from the state for economic development in Huron County. We are also very pleased that New Horizons Baking Company is making the commitment to move ahead with the project. This helps us keep one of our stronger businesses and their employees here in Huron County.”

“We appreciate more than ever the assistance from the State of Ohio and the Ohio Rail Development Commission. Their support and financial investment will enable this project to move forward quickly,” stated Heinz.

She added, “Huron County and the entire Norwalk community should be excited and appreciative of the ISIF grant award. During these difficult economic times, it is impressive that the amazing attributes, potential and tenacity of this community did not go unnoticed by the State of Ohio. This is the first Industrial Site Improvement Fund grant Huron County has been awarded since 2005. It is a huge win for our community.”

The new Huron County Development Council Director Alex Beres commented, “This affirms a recognition by the State of our area’s industrial perseverance, and is a viable investment in infrastructure. I’m very grateful for the hard work from Ellen, Gary, and New Horizons who did the heavy lifting for this project before I was here.”

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