



## Dole Fresh Vegetables To Add New Lines To Bessemer City Salad Production Plant

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During the April 4, 2007 grand opening of the Dole Fresh Vegetables production plant it was announced that additional production lines will be installed. Richard Dahl, President and COO of Dole Food Company, Inc. made the announcement at the event. "We will spend an additional \$12 million on 'tender leaf' production lines that process spinach and other spring mixes that we have had co-packed in the past. It is our intention to have these lines in place within the next nine months and to hire an additional 200 workers for the Bessemer City plant."

The production lines will consist of conveyors, cleaning and packaging equipment to produce bagged leaf salads and salad kits. All design, construction and M&E procurement will be handled by the Dennis Group of Springfield, MA. Construction is scheduled to begin in the latter portion of the second quarter of 2007 with completion projected for the fourth quarter of 2007.

Gaston County leaders responded to Mr. Dahl's comments with great enthusiasm. "This is wonderful news for Gaston County! Dole is keeping its promise in creating 200 jobs and adding investment ahead of their projected schedule. This year just got a whole lot better for the citizens of Gaston County!" said Vice Chairman Pearl Floyd of the Gaston County Board of Commissioners. Mayor Allan Farris exclaimed, "What great news for Bessemer City! This exceeds our expectations for their first year. Dole's rapid growth in both jobs and investment is the best thing to happen in Bessemer City." Jim Jones, Chairman of the Gaston County EDC added, "The EDC is very pleased with this announcement. I am grateful to the folks at Dole for their continued investment in Gaston County."

Dole's initial investment in Gaston County was announced at \$54 with employment of 525 persons by 2009. This announcement will bring Dole's investment in the Bessemer City plant to approximately \$60 million in building and equipment. The projected employment level will be attained ahead of schedule with the additional salad production lines. Potential employees will be hired through the North Carolina Employment Security's Gaston County office located at 1391 Bessemer City Road.

Dole Food Company, Inc, with 2006 revenues of \$6.2 billion, is the world's largest producer and marketer of high-quality fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and fresh-cut flowers. Dole markets a growing line of packaged foods and frozen fruit and is a produce industry leader in nutrition education and research.

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