



GASTON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



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August 2, 2005

Project Announcement

Dole Brings 525 Jobs to Gaston County -Invests \$54 Million In New Facility Near Bessemer City-

GASTON COUNTY, NC – Bud Antle Inc., an indirect subsidiary of Dole, will invest \$54 million to build and equip a processing plant for vegetables in Gaston County, creating 525 jobs within three years and a total of 900 jobs by 2016. Dole is the world's largest producer of fruits and vegetables.

"Dole's decision to locate in Gaston County is a tremendous win for the company, the county and the state because it means hundreds of jobs for hundreds of hard-working North Carolina families," Easley said. "Our investments in workforce, infrastructure and education are ensuring long-term economic growth in North Carolina by bringing companies like Dole to our state."

David H. Murdock, Dole chairman and chief executive officer, has owned property in North Carolina since the early 1980s when he acquired the then-Cannon Mills Company. "Locating the plant in Gaston County will expand Dole's distribution network and facilitate delivery of its salad products to its Southern and East Coast customers," Murdock said. "The location, the incentives and potential workforce were all strong factors in making the decision to locate in North Carolina. I look forward to working with state and local officials to bring this project to fruition."

Dole also is considering locating a frozen fruit processing plant in North Carolina and has current plans to increase the acquisition of vegetable crops and berry products for existing plants, as well as these new plants.

Dole sells more than 200 products, including fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, packaged and frozen food, and fresh-cut flowers. Dole also is a produce industry leader in nutrition education and research. The company's 2004 revenues exceeded \$5 billion with more than 64,000 workers in 90 countries.

This is the company's first facility in North Carolina. The new jobs will be mainly production workers who will take fresh vegetables and process them into bagged products for distribution in the southern and eastern United States.

Murdock, who took over Dole in 2003, recently visited the state Farmer's Market and indicated that, in addition to the new jobs he will create, North Carolina farmers may benefit by supplying some of the produce for the new processing plant, as well as for a potential frozen fruit plant.

The project will receive \$500,000 from the One North Carolina Fund, which helps the state recruit and increase the number of quality jobs by providing financial assistance to businesses deemed by the governor to be vital to a healthy and growing state economy. Through the use of this Fund, more than 17,000 jobs and \$2 billion in investments have been created since 2001.

Dole also plans to take advantage of tax credits offered through the William S. Lee Act, which the General Assembly recently voted to extend until Dec. 31, 2007. The Lee Act could net the company more than \$6 million in tax credits.

In addition to the General Assembly, where the effort was led by Sen. David Hoyle, other partners who made the announcement possible include the N.C. Departments of Commerce and Transportation, Gaston County economic developer Donny Hicks, and Bessemer City. For more information about Dole visit www.dole.com.



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