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Frito-Lay in the chips

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Grant helps retain jobs, gives boost to expansion

Frito-Lay in Beloit will be receiving \$2 million from Gov. Jim Doyle to support the company's \$28.5 million expansion and modernization project.

Most of the money will be used to expand Frito-Lay's Cheetos line and make infrastructure improvements throughout the plant. It will result in the preservation of 500 existing jobs and 24 new full-time jobs.



From left; Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle shakes hands with Frito-Lay Midwest North Region Vice President Dave Reamsnyder. The plant is receiving a \$2 million state grant to expand its Cheeto line and make infrastructure improvements.

Staff photo by Hillary Gavan

Doyle was in Beloit Wednesday to announce Frito-Lay was selected for the award because of its long standing history of environmental sustainability initiatives. Green Tier companies are committed to voluntary environmental performance that exceeds minimum standards. Doyle signed Green Tier into law in 2004, to encourage a collaborate approach to environmental performance between DNR and Wisconsin businesses and associations.

"I am pleased today to be able to invest in Frito-Lay, which has continued to grow in Wisconsin and has grown the right way — by investing in the community and continuing its commitment to sustainability," Doyle said. "By becoming a Green Tier program, Frito-Lay is showing it's a true leader in protecting our environment. It proves that they are not just interested in meeting minimum status quo requirements, but are truly dedicated to protecting our resources and ensuring that Beloit and Wisconsin residents continue to breathe clean air."

Frito-Lay has implemented many environmentally friendly polices over the years. In the past decade alone, Frito-Lay in Beloit has cut water usage by more than 50 percent; gas by 35 percent; and electricity by 22 percent.

The Beloit site was the first to achieve a zero landfill status last December. This winter the plant will be heated with waste heat recaptured during the manufacturing process, according to Frito-Lay Beloit Technical Manager Mike Stahl.

Beloit Frito-Lay has formed green teams, or groups of employees to find waste to conserve energy. The team has grown from two people to 40.

In addition, Frito-Lay Beloit Traffic Center participates in the EPA's SmartWay Transport Program to reduce emissions and save money on fuel and maintenance. The OTR drivers logged more than 8 million miles in 2008.

Because of its commitment to the environment, the Beloit facility is working to obtain gold Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification by 2010. LEED is part of the Green Building Rating System, which encourages sustainable green building practices.

"Sustainability drives productivity," Stahl said.

The Governor agreed.

"It's not only the right thing to do but good business practices," Doyle said. "As costs of energy and raw materials go up, good companies are learning how to conserve energy and reduce waste."

Frito-Lay has been at 2810 Kennedy Drive in Beloit for 36 years, growing from 200 employees to more than 500. The site manufactures more than 140 million pounds of snacks annually including Lay's potato chips, Fritos corn chips, Doritos flavored tortilla chips, Cheetos cheese-flavored snacks, Ruffles potato chips and Tostitos tortilla chips. Snacks made in Beloit travel to seven states in the region - Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Northern Michigan and Illinois.

Beloit's Frito-Lay is also a strong supporter of area non-profits including the Salvation Army, Caritas, Head Start and Adopt-A-Highway.

The \$2 million award is from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, a flexible program providing communities with resources to address community development needs. The CDBG program works to ensure decent affordable housing, to provide services to the most vulnerable in communities, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses.

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