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Diversified Foods Announces \$12 Million Expansion At Madisonville Plant

Company will retain 120 jobs, add 44 jobs at St. Tammany Parish manufacturing facility

BATON ROUGE, La. — Today, Gov. John Bel Edwards and Diversified Foods and Seasonings CEO Peter Smith announced the company will invest \$12 million to expand and upgrade the company's food manufacturing facility near Madisonville, Louisiana. The St. Tammany Parish plant provides Diversified Foods' corporate clients with a variety of prepared food products, including the red beans sold at Popeyes Louisiana Kitchen restaurants.

Diversified Foods will create 44 new direct jobs with an average annual salary of \$28,300, plus benefits, while retaining 120 existing jobs. Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project also will result in 110 new indirect jobs, for a total of more than 150 new jobs in the Southeast Region. The company announced it is moving a major production line from its Nebraska City, Nebraska, facility to the Madisonville plant, resulting in the new jobs in St. Tammany Parish.

"Great food is a hallmark of Louisiana's unique culture, and Diversified Foods and Seasonings has been a great corporate ambassador for Louisiana's culinary traditions across the U.S. and beyond," Gov. Edwards said. "Louisiana is a leading state for manufacturing, and our high level of productivity extends to the food production industry. This expansion of the Madisonville production plant is an important project win for our Southeast Region, and we welcome Diversified Foods' decision to continue building on the success it has found in St. Tammany Parish."

The St. Tammany Parish plant is the largest of Diversified Foods' three manufacturing facilities, with 93,000 square feet of space and 100 million pounds of production capacity. The company considered both the Louisiana plant and its smaller manufacturing facility in Nebraska City, Nebraska, for the expansion. Diversified Foods also operates a flour blending plant in Theodore, Alabama, where custom-blended dry marinades, gravies, sauces, breading and batters are produced.

"Diversified Foods and Seasonings LLC is proud to have partnered with the State of Louisiana and Louisiana Economic Development on this exciting initiative," Smith said. "Diversified Foods is a homegrown Louisiana company and one of the largest manufacturers and employers within St. Tammany Parish. LED's support of this expansion project has made it possible for Diversified to increase its plant square footage in Madisonville by over 20 percent and provide 44 new jobs within the parish by next year. This is clearly a 'win-win' for both the State of Louisiana and Diversified Foods."

The expansion project is generating 100 construction jobs.

"We are proud to be the home of an expanding Diversified Foods," St. Tammany Parish President Pat Brister said. "St. Tammany Parish is the perfect place for businesses to expand or locate. We have a highly

educated workforce, a superior quality of life, a very accessible location and an amazing school system. Diversified's commitment to expand and increase its workforce is a testament to their business operations, as well as a testament to the place they call home."

To secure the project, LED offered Diversified Foods a competitive incentive package that includes a \$500,000 performance-based grant to be used for infrastructure improvements and sewer upgrades. The company also is expected to apply for the state's Enterprise Zone and Industrial Tax Exemption programs.

"We are thrilled to have Diversified Foods and Seasonings expand their business here in St. Tammany," St. Tammany Corp. CEO Chris Masingill said. "The company has a long history in the food manufacturing industry in southeast Louisiana, and they began operations in 2002 at the Madisonville facility. Since that time, Diversified Foods and Seasonings LLC has retained a talented workforce while continuing to grow jobs here in our community. We are honored that the company has once again chosen St. Tammany to grow their company, and we will support them as they continue to thrive."

The Diversified Foods production site in Madisonville also houses the company's Technology Culinary Center. The center is staffed by chefs and food scientists who are involved in product research and development, as well as new product innovation that draws from Louisiana culinary traditions.

"The Greater New Orleans region is globally renowned for food manufacturing, and we are extremely proud of the expansion of Diversified Foods in St. Tammany Parish," GNO Inc. President and CEO Michael Hecht said. "With a \$12 million capital investment, the Diversified Foods project will result in hundreds of new jobs that support the entire region. Along with our partners at the state and parish level, GNO Inc. will continue to support Diversified and food manufacturing in the region."

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About Diversified Foods and Seasonings: Diversified Foods and Seasonings LLC is a leading U.S. food manufacturer that produces batters, breadings, biscuit mixes, spice blends, side dishes and sauces for all 50 states and 20 countries around the globe. Established nearly 35 years ago, the company is family-owned and headquartered in Covington, Louisiana. For more information, visit diversified-foods.com.

About St. Tammany Corporation: As the lead economic development organization for St. Tammany, the St. Tammany Corporation functions as the comprehensive resource center for business services throughout the parish. The services provided by the St. Tammany Corporation include, but are not limited to, business retention, site selection, workforce development, research and data services, state and local incentives, business attraction, talent retention, certified site development, relocation support, and marketing St. Tammany.