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St. Tammany Nutrition and School Food Services Facility Announces \$4.6 Million Expansion

Healthy School Food Collaborative project to result in 217 new North Shore jobs

PEARL RIVER, LA – The Healthy School Food Collaborative, a food services company dedicated to expanding access to nutritious meal options for students, families and communities, announced a \$4.6 million, five-year expansion plan for its St. Tammany Parish facility.

To support the expansion, the company projects it will create 77 new direct jobs over a 10-year period with an estimated average annual salary of \$53,571. Louisiana Economic Development estimates the project will result in 140 new indirect jobs, for a total of 217 new jobs in the Southeast Region.

“Announcements like this one are positive not only for our economy but for the public health of our communities as well,” Gov. John Bel Edwards said. “The expansion of the Healthy School Food Collaborative’s Pearl River facility will support the company’s mission to provide Louisiana school children and their families with access to balanced, cost-effective meals while also ushering in new opportunities for the state’s food manufacturing industry.”

HSFC was established in New Orleans in 2016 with the mission to reduce childhood obesity in Louisiana by expanding access to affordable nutritious food options. The company established an operations base off U.S. Hwy. 11 in Pearl River and diversified its food services, which currently reach clients in 16 states and Washington, D.C.

The expansion will allow the company to reach additional markets throughout Louisiana and neighboring states with an array of services ranging from National School Lunch Program consulting and nutrition counseling to food co-packing and meal delivery logistics.

“This is a culmination of over a decade of working in this industry in Louisiana and we look forward to the opportunity to serve the community that has allowed us to grow,” HSFC CEO James A. Graham Jr. said.

The project will be divided into three phases: the addition of a commercial kitchen in year one, the expansion of existing cold storage and USDA food manufacturing facilities in years two and

three; and the development of a new HSFC Research and Development Culinary Lab, a hybrid food services start-up incubator and food co-packing and co-manufacturing space.

“This concept will bring unique food manufacturing opportunities to our area and provide support to existing companies through a partnership with the Louisiana Restaurant Association,” St. Tammany Parish President Mike Cooper said. “The food and beverage sector has always been a vital part of the St. Tammany Parish economy. I congratulate Healthy School Food Collaborative on successfully bringing their vision to fruition.”

HSFC plans to open its R&D culinary lab to out-of-state companies looking to develop and produce food products in Louisiana. It will also be made available as an experimental kitchen and co-packing space for local chefs and restaurateurs.

“Entrepreneurship and innovation are pillars of an effective and robust economic development strategy,” St. Tammany Corporation CEO Chris Masingill said. “The Healthy School Food Collaborative will be increasing much needed co-manufacturing, co-packing, and cold storage options on the North Shore, and creating new quality jobs in a high-demand industry for our area residents. Exceptional projects like this reinforce that St. Tammany continues to be the destination of choice for businesses.”

To secure the project in Pearl River, the state offered HSFC a competitive incentive package including the full services of LED FastStart, Louisiana’s nationally acclaimed recruitment, customized training and workforce development program. The company is also expected to participate in the state’s Quality Jobs program.

“This expansion from the Healthy School Food Collaboration will increase their ability to serve the needs of companies around southeast Louisiana,” said Michael Hecht, President and CEO of Greater New Orleans, Inc. “As our region’s food and beverage manufacturing industry continues to grow, so have the needs for critical services like those that will be performed at this new facility. This project also aligns well with a shared vision for St. Tammany Parish to evolve into a thriving light-industrial location.”

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About Healthy School Food Collaborative: HSFC is a team of food service operations professionals who support charter and non-public schools and districts and community organizations with food program implementation and management. Using best practices gained through years of experience, along with a commitment to our partners' success, we ensure sustainable food program operations in schools and communities. Read more at TheHealthySchoolFoodCollaborative.com.

About St. Tammany Corporation: As the lead economic development organization for St. Tammany, [St. Tammany Corporation](http://St.TammanyCorporation.com) serves as the comprehensive resource center for business services throughout the parish. St. Tammany Corporation’s services include 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. Since the organization's launch in 2018, St. Tammany Corporation facilitated business expansion and attraction announcements representing over \$60 million in capital investment and 1,520 new and retained jobs in St. Tammany Parish.