

BELLE FOURCHE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Albany Farms Relocates Food Manufacturing Operation to Belle Fourche

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Continued page 2

Leadership Belle Fourche

November 18, 2021

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: BFDC Conference Room - 5th & Grant Plaza, 608 5th Ave.

BFDC Board of Directors Meeting

November 10, 2021

Time: 7:00 a.m.

Location: BFDC Conference Room - 5th & Grant Plaza, 608 5th Ave.

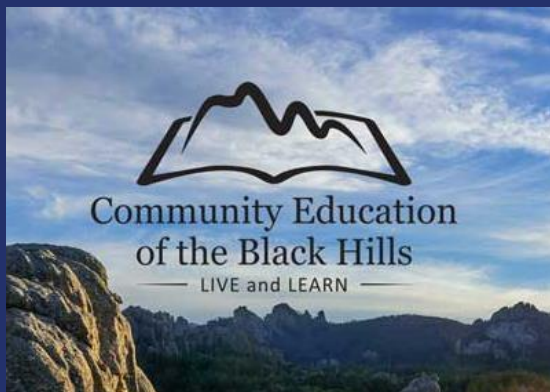
RESOURCE

Rushmore Region Economic Development Alliance

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Albany Farms Relocates Food Manufacturing Operation To Belle Fourche

Move will eventually mean hundreds of jobs coming to the area

By Belle Fourche Beacon Staff

BELLE FOURCHE – Albany Farms has chosen to move the headquarters of its food manufacturing operations from Los Angeles to Belle Fourche, S.D., with the goal of beginning production of their signature line of ramen noodle product later this year. According to Bill Saller, President and CEO, the operation will initially employ up to 60 workers with expansion plans to be phased in over the next four years that will greatly increase production and bring more than 500 hundred additional jobs.

“This is an exciting time for Belle Fourche and an exciting time for our community moving forward,” said Renae Shaffer, President of the Belle Fourche Economic Development (BFED) Board of Directors. “What is most impressive about this company is how it works with our roots in agriculture. It’s the type of business that is perfect for our community.”

Hollie Stalder, BFED Executive Director, said their organization along with the Governor’s Office of Economic Development (GOED) has been working on this for the past 10 months and it finally came together. “Belle Fourche was perfectly positioned for this project,” she said. “We have the transportation network in place with the trucking in our region, the rail that serves our community, and the industrial park which was ready and presented the perfect opportunity for them.”



ALBANY FARMS HAS CLOSED ON THE PURCHASE OF THE OLD PERMIAN TANK FACILITY IN THE BELLE FOURCHE RAIL AND INDUSTRIAL PARK AND WILL BEGIN PRODUCTION OF TWISTED NOODLE RAMEN NOODLES AS SOON AS DECEMBER. THE COMPANY PLANS TO EXPAND UPON THE 50,000 SQUARE FOOT BUILDING WITH A 100,000 SQUARE FOOT ADDITION. INITIALLY THE COMPANY PLANS TO EMPLOY 150 WORKERS BY THE SPRING AND HOPES TO EXPAND TO SEVERAL HUNDRED WORKERS BY THE MIDDLE OF THE DECADE. - BEACON PHOTO

Saller told the Beacon there were two factors that prompted his company to make the complex decision to relocate from the west coast. The first was the international supply chain disruptions that came with the pandemic. Albany Farms wanted to bring all operational aspects of the business from overseas back to the United States – no longer relying on sourcing raw materials from Southeast Asia.

“In every horrible situation there is opportunity,” Saller said. “What we see in all this is that it has allowed us to get into U.S. production, to bring jobs back, and be a small part in bringing the food supply back to where it should be, and we feel good about that.”

Because their product line relies heavily on flour, the decision to move to the wheat belt brought focus to the relocation decision. With that came the decision to move out of California to a more business-friendly environment in the Midwest and South Dakota presented the best option. Albany Farms reviewed proposals from Rapid City and Piedmont but ultimately settled on Belle Fourche.

“Almost immediately everybody in our search group felt Belle Fourche was the perfect fit for us. The main thing was the people. We were greeted warmly and made to feel welcome,” Saller said. “Moving a business is not easy to do, it’s complicated and expensive. But I do want to say it was the tenacity and the warmth that came from Hollie and everybody else in Belle Fourche that got us to this point today. And we plan on rewarding that with some significant growth here, with this and other ventures that we have moving forward.”

Albany Farms has already closed on the purchase of the 50,000 square foot Permian Tank manufacturing plant at the Belle Fourche Industrial and Rail Park. The company already has employees on site converting the building into a facility which will produce food products.



“We should have brand new machinery in early November,” Saller said. “If all the machinery arrives and our engineering team gets it up and running, we’re hoping to be packaging at the end of November.”

Saller says there will be additional machinery to create another production line that should go online in January with the goal of being in full production mode by late March or early April 2022. By then Saller says they will need at least

150 employees, from machine operators and assemblers to plant managers, engineers, and human resource personnel.

“These are all new jobs – fresh jobs,” Saller said. “We feel confident that we can find enough folks to fill those positions.”

Stalder is confident that the local workforce has the skills that Albany Farms will be looking for. “I think of how diverse our people are here because they have agricultural backgrounds,” Stalder said. “They know how to operate equipment and have multifunctional skill sets.”

Albany Farms began developing its ramen product five years ago and began selling it under the “Signature Panda” branding in major retail outlets such as Wal Mart in 2019. To date the company has moved more than 50-million packages during the pandemic. It is a stable and nearly recession-proof product and Saller sees the demand growing every year.

“Ramen is quick, cheap and it’s there when you need it,” he said. “Global sales are now at \$30 billion dollars and that is expected to grow to \$70 billion in 5-to-6 years.”

Saller says they have customers waiting right now for their U.S. made product. And Albany Farms has plans to match the rising demand by expanding the new Belle Fourche facility in phases over the next four years. The next step will be adding a 100,000 square foot addition to the existing building to increase production. After that Saller says they will build a second 150,000 square foot plant on 23 adjacent acres they have purchased from BFED. That move will allow them to expand into other food

product lines such as boxed macaroni and cheese. By that time manufacturing will have grown from 600 ramen packages produced per minute to a minimum of 3,000 per minute.

“Ultimately the plan is for the Belle Fourche facility to be one of, if not the largest ramen producing facilities in the country,” Saller said.

The Belle Fourche made product will be sold under the brand name Twisted Noodle and will be distributed nationwide. The package labeling will include text which says the product was made in Belle Fourche, SD.

“We’re going to be very proud of that,” Saller said. “Normally when we import (product) we make that font as small as possible. Now that we’re here, in the Center of the Nation, it’s going to be a very prominent font I can assure you.”

Saller says they plan to use wheat grown in South Dakota for production from day one. “There’s a fiscal reason for that in addition to doing the right thing for the local business community. Flour locally sourced in the U.S. is much cheaper than what we’re currently importing, which is about 35% more. It’s better fiscally but also provides business for our neighbors.”

Saller also adds that they want to locally source as much as they can including corrugated packaging, films, oils, and protein sources.

By June of 2024 Albany plans to construct a flour mill at the Industrial Park which will produce not only wheat for production but packaged consumer wheat under the Albany Farms brand. By-products of the milling process will be used to provide some electrical power generation for the plant and local feed for ranchers. At that point Albany expects to employ between 800 and 900 workers.

“It (the expansion) is contingent on our partnerships at the state level and the federal level,” Saller said, “because the amount of investment will be very significant to get to this point.”

Saller expects that up to \$40 million will be required to fulfill that vision.

As Albany Farms grows its footprint in Belle Fourche, BFED knows that the community will need to be prepared for the challenges that will accompany that potential growth. Those challenges include workforce recruitment and training and housing.

“That’s why it is going to be important to have the support from the Governor’s Office of Economic Development and it will be critical to moving forward,” Stalder said. “The state has some great programs for training and they’ve indicated they will assist with that. And (Albany Farms) was also a driving force behind our recent housing study. Now we must make sure that it doesn’t just sit on the shelf but gets put to work.”

“Your community has two choices, either it moves forward, or it dies,” said Shaffer. “We don’t want to be the latter.”

Belle Fourche Beacon | 10-26-21



BILL SALLER, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF ALBANY FARMS

Rail Siding Expansion Progressing



Beautiful Belle Fourche



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36th Annual Agri-Business Banquet Another Success

Colleen Burnner | Belle Fourche Beacon

BELLE FOURCHE – Organized and sponsored primarily by the Black Hills Roundup Ag Committee, along with Belle Flowers Design & Decor, Belle Fourche Beacon, Black Hills Pioneer, Center of the Nation Wool, David Pummel & Associates, Eaton Construction, Farm Credit Services of America, Grap's Burgers & Brews, Jackson Dental and Sand Creek Printing, the 36th year of the Agri-Business Banquet is in the books.



This year's Master of Ceremonies was Clint Englehart, Corporate Sales Manager for Grossenburg Implement. He started things off by introducing Hollie Stalder, Executive Director of the Belle Fourche Development Corporation who welcomed the 240+ people in attendance.

Dinner and refreshments were provided by the Branding Iron Steakhouse, and their staff served the people plated dinners.

Award sponsors included CBH Co-op, Cowboys Too, New Generation Feeds, Scott and Angela Reder and West Tire & Alignment. Butch Samuleson provided dinner music throughout the event. Social Media manager Zeann Gollither made sure everything was advertised. There were numerous table sponsors.

Harlan Stephens, Pioneer Wealth Management, presented the Ag Leadership award, this year, to David Ollila. Ollila was a former 34-year ag teacher in Newell, served nine years as SDSU Extension West River Sheep Specialist and was a 25-year FFA Advisor. "Ollila's impact continues as he serves as the Soil Health Specialist for the South Dakota Soil Health Coalition," said Stephens. "He has mentored and impacted many young people to remain in the area of agriculture."

As Ollila accepted the award he mentioned that in his years teaching ag education in Newell, most young people talked about "getting out of the state." "I see little Mary (Bruner) Blair, little Dallas (Loop) Connor and little Brandon Freed out there, still involved today," said Ollila. Ollila thanked his family, Holly, Ethan, Tate, and Finn, his parents Art and Judy Ollila and and his "main man" Bruce Brunner and his wife Colleen for "still educating him." A check for \$250 for the NVN Food Pantry was presented along with the award.



DAVID OLLILA, SHOWN HERE WITH HIS SON FINN, WAS NAMED AG LEADER FOR 2021 AT THE ANNUAL AGRI-BUSINESS APPRECIATION BANQUET. BRUNNER PHOTO

Scott Reder presented the Young Rancher award, this year presenting it to Cheryl and Curt Westland. They are fifth and fourth generation cattle ranchers in the local area. Curt holds certification in equine massage and Cheryl graduated from the Black Hills State with a Bachelor of Science degree and later from University of Montana with a Dr. of Pharmacy. The couple owns and operates the Prairie Hills Pharmacy in Belle Fourche.



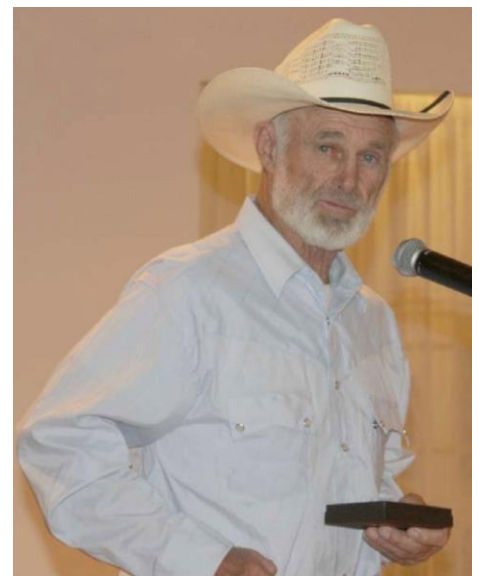
CHERYL AND CURT WESTLAND WERE NAMED YOUNG RANCHER COUPLE FOR 2021 AT THE ANNUAL AGRI-BUSINESS APPRECIATION BANQUET. BRUNNER PHOTO

Sgt. 1st Class-Retired Dana Bowman literally flew in to present the Ag Business award to Tim and Dr. Chandy Olson, who run CATL Resources. Olson was raised in the area on the Lorraine Kiplinger (his grandmother) place and is an accomplished private pilot, often utilizing this service for medical flights, livestock location, and for the Sacred Mountain Retreat Center. The couple has been instrumental in their support of the Butte/Lawrence County Fair. Chandy is a veterinarian.



TIM AND DR. CHANDY OLSON WERE RECOGNIZED AS THE AG BUSINESS OF THE YEAR FOR 2021 AT THE ANNUAL AGRI-BUSINESS APPRECIATION BANQUET. THEY RUN CATL RESOURCES. PICTURED WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER DANA BOWMAN. MICHELLE EVANS IMAGES PHOTO

John Johnson, Sturgis, former local ag banker, presented the Ag Person of the Year award to Gene Johnny Johnson. "I heard the scale broke down at the Belle Fourche Livestock today, but Johnny was able to get his cattle across before that happened so he could be here," said Johnson. Johnny Johnson, one of eight children who homesteaded near Spearfish and still runs livestock there today, is also a pilot, flying a J3 and scaring some of his friends. "I appreciate everyone and this award, and even though I don't deserve it, I'm going to take it anyway," said Johnson. "You know the letters of the alphabet go, b, c, d," he said. "I think the b stands for our birth, and the d for our death. It's the c, that stands for the choices we make between the two." He said that he follows Jesus and believes that He helps him through each day and the choices he makes.



GENE "JOHNNY" JOHNSON, SPEARFISH, WAS NAMED AG PERSON OF THE YEAR FOR 2021 AT THE ANNUAL AGRI-BUSINESS APPRECIATION BANQUET. BRUNNER PHOTO

Bowman spoke briefly to those gathered, sharing how he helped to prevent Noriega during the Panama Invasion to keep from gaining control. He received a Bronze Star for his actions during that campaign. In 1994 he and his teammate Sgt. Jose Aguillon, collided in midair during practice for the Demanding Diamon, a maneuver that calls the jumpers to create a "diamond shape" in the sky with smoke which trails from one boot. As they moved away from each other and then back toward each other, the two collided, killing Aguillon and severing Bowman's legs, one above and one below the knee. Nine months later he performed his first jump as a double amputee. During his career he has performed over 5000 jumps. "I always have my spare leg with me," he joked. "The point of this story, and those of the ones receiving these awards tonight is that 'we all need to make a difference,'" said Bowman.



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