Legumes center coming

$10 million processing facility will be new tenant at the NPCC

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Officials see peas and lentils in the agricultural future of Bismarck and Mandan.

The production of lentils and peas could increase in the Bismarck-Mandan area, after a new tenant at the Northern Plains Commerce Centre announced Tuesday it would begin building its $10 million pulse crops processing facility this fall.

Saskcan Pulse Trading, a global agribusiness with operations in Canada and Turkey, announced its plans to build in the commerce center for the company’s United States operations, which will be called United Pulse Trading.

The facility should begin being operational in fall of 2007, said Murad Al-Katib, president.

“The day we open, we'll be doing business,” Al-Katib said.

The company is the world’s largest exporter of split and value-added pulse crops, or legumes with seeds used as food, Al-Katib said.

And North Dakota is the nation’s top producer of lentils and peas, said Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson.

“What it really means is we’re going to continue to grow,” Johnson said. “It’s the world’s OK to be a jerk
Pork gets nice and spicy when you add that extra Caribbean flavor
Life, 1E
Center: May have up to 60 workers

FROM LA

going to expand the acreage of pulse crops in the area.

In 2006, Divide County in northwest North Dakota had the most acres of lentils in the state, and McLean County was the largest producer of peas. Morton County barely scratched the surface of acreages in production, and Burleigh County was 12th in the state for production.

But Eric Barsch, executive director of North Dakota Dry Pea and Lentil Association, said that could change.

"That's going to entice more acres, because it's going to increase more demand," Barsch said.

The new production facility will be 50,000 square feet and employ up to 80 workers, Al-Katib said. Its annual processing capacity will be 150,000 metric tons, and it could use up to 7,500 railcars a year, he said.

Details as to how much the company will pay to lease the property from the city were not yet finalized, said Gloria David, public information officer for the city of Bismarck.

The announcement came during a ceremony commemorating the completion of the first phase of railroad track at the commerce center Tuesday morning. The facility began as a project to help keep the Bobcat manufacturing center in the area and evolved into the intermodal, transloading facility that it's becoming, officials said.

Mallory Alexander International is managing the facility and the city anticipates other companies will build in the area.

"The Northern Plains Commerce Centre is now one step closer to helping transform our economy," Sen. Kent Conrad, D-N.D., said at Tuesday's event.


"This group assembled here is an extraordinary team," Dorgan said. "This town is extraordinary. This town is on the move."

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