Center: May have up to 60 workers

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go ing to expand the acreage of pulse crops in the area.

In 2015, 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 Bartsch, 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," Bartsch said.

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