Dietz & Watson to Build Philly Center After Massive Fire

The Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Food products manufacturer Dietz & Watson will expand its Philadelphia operation and add 158 jobs following a massive fire last year that devastated a company warehouse in southern New Jersey, Pennsylvania officials said Tuesday.

The company plans to spend $50 million to build a new 200,000-square-foot distribution center, expand its headquarters and manufacturing facility in the Tacony section of the city and build a new fleet maintenance facility, Gov. Tom Corbett and Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter said.

"A state-of-the-art conveyer system will efficiently transfer food from its kitchens directly to new storage facilities, eliminating more than 200 weekly truck trips over the Delaware River, reducing congestion and pollution," the governor's office said in a statement.

Dietz & Watson will add 48 jobs and affiliated logistics firm Black Bear Distribution will relocate 110 jobs from Delanco, New Jersey, where the September fire destroyed its distribution center. The statement from the governor's office said the current 691 Philadelphia-based employees will be retained.

Officials said the company will be eligible for more than $7 million in public funds, including $5 million from the Redevelopment Capital Assistance Program and a $2 million Pennsylvania First Program grant, as well as $7.25 million in taxpayer-backed loans.

Dietz & Watson, founded in 1939, supplies deli meats and cheeses to supermarkets and neighborhood delis.

Officials said earlier that the 11-alarm Delanco blaze had left the company's 266,000-square-foot distribution center a total loss, but the company would take care of its employees and customers.

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