

Fresno food distributor breaks ground on project

By Robert Rodriguez
brodriguez@fresnobee.com

JD Food, an independent food distributor, broke ground Monday on an expansion project that will nearly double the size of its workforce.

The \$10.5 million expansion project at 4671 E. Edgar Ave. in southeast Fresno involves construction of a 65,000-square-foot food distribution and processing center. The first phase of the expansion is expected to be completed by May 30.

Mark Ford, president of the family-run JD Food, said business is booming and the company and its affiliate, Certified Meat Products, have outgrown their facilities near Maple and Commerce avenues.

Ford said the expansion will add 144 jobs to its current workforce of 160 over the next decade. If needed, an additional phase could expand the building to 100,000 square feet.

At the groundbreaking ceremony Monday morning, Ford thanked Fresno city officials for their help with the project. Ford admitted that the company gave serious consideration to moving to Madera, but finally settled on the current site after meeting with city officials.

"I love our city and I am glad we are going to stay home," Ford said.

Mayor Ashley Swearingin, Larry Westerlund, the city's economic development director, and Fresno City Councilman Sal Quintero also attended the event.

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Swearingin said she is pleased the company is staying in Fresno and adding new jobs to the community.

"This is an exciting day for JD, Fresno and the San Joaquin Valley," she said. "The jobs created will mean everything. We know the difference that a job can make to a family."

JD Food also has been one of the original supporters of the Fresno Food Expo, an annual gathering of food buyers and food makers.

The company is one of the local leaders in supplying food to retailers and the food service industry. It has an inventory of more than 5,000 products and its territory stretches from Sacramento to Bakersfield, including the Central Coast and Yosemite and Sequoia national parks.

Robert Rodriguez: [559-441-6327](tel:559-441-6327), [@FresnoBeeBob](https://www.instagram.com/FresnoBeeBob)



The Fresno Bee