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## Kerry Shows Off New Facility



Kerry Group representatives and city and state officials attended on Tuesday the opening ceremony for the Kerry Customer Center on Beloit's East Side. [See a related story.](#)

By Ashley Rhodebeck

[arhodebeck@beloitdailynews.com](mailto:arhodebeck@beloitdailynews.com)

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Dignitaries from the city, state and Ireland on Tuesday celebrated the official opening of the Kerry Customer Center on Beloit's East Side.

"Obviously this is a very significant day for our community," Beloit City Manager Larry Arft said to the hundreds gathered outside for the ribbon-cutting ceremony, including Consul General of Ireland Martin Rouine.

Arft in the past four days attended a ribbon-cutting for Fairbanks Flats, the opening of Turtle Island II play area and a ceremony announcing plans for the Beloit Public Library's former location.

"None of these rise to the magnificence and significance of this facility," he said.

He noted the 350 high-paying jobs the facility created and the 250 Kerry employees who transferred to the Beloit location. He hopes the customer center will help draw even more food industry companies to Beloit.

"In addition," Arft said, "this building has literally changed the skyline of Beloit."

The \$50 million project broke ground in September 2007 on 124 acres cornered between Interstates 90 and 43 along Millington Road.

Employees began moving from the West Grand Avenue site to the 280,000-square-foot facility — and home of the Kerry Americas headquarters — last December.

It includes a state-of-the-art commercial center to help customers gain access to Kerry's technologies, application centers and laboratories.

Furthermore, the building brings together employees who were once separated by hundreds of miles.

"For Kerry today it represents a key milestone," said Gerry Behan, president and CEO of Kerry Ingredients and Flavours. "We're proud to be part of the greater Beloit community and look forward to many years of success and prosperity."

Stan McCarthy, Kerry Group chief executive, agreed.

"Needless to say," he said, "we've had a wonderful history in Beloit."

Based in Ireland, Kerry Group is a world leader in food ingredients and flavors and serves customers in more than 140 countries.

Its manufacturing facilities are located in 23 countries. Meanwhile, Centers of Excellence have been established in Ireland, the Netherlands and China.

In the 20 years the corporation has invested in Beloit, Kerry has grown to include an "unrivaled range" of technology platforms, Behan said.

Gov. Jim Doyle complimented Kerry, describing it as a good employer and a good citizen and supporter of Beloit. He commended the company for its leadership and forthrightness.

"Kerry is exactly the kind of company we are looking hard to attract to the state and expand in the state," he said. "Thank you for your longtime commitment to the State of Wisconsin."

Behan and McCarthy noted the company's success in the Americas wouldn't have been possible without its employees.

"Clearly, today's milestone could not be achievable without you," Behan said.



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**Kerry Center to increase efficiency, help customers**

By Ashley Rhodebeck

[arhodebeck@beloitdailynews.com](mailto:arhodebeck@beloitdailynews.com)

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Before the Kerry Customer Center was constructed on Beloit's East Side, coordinating communication among employees took time.

Branches of the company were located throughout the country — Dallas, Seattle and Miami, for example — because Kerry Ingredients and Flavours had a habit of acquiring businesses. The geographical separation made synchronizing schedules tough, said Declan Roche, commercial director of new technology platforms.

"Now I can wander up and down the floors," he said Tuesday as he showed visitors Kerry's new \$50 million facility.

The 280,000-square-foot center is essentially four buildings in one that share one goal: to help the company's customers, he said.

Kerry produces food ingredients and flavors serving the food and beverage industry. The customer center ensures its creations can be reproduced efficiently and to the customers' liking.

The heart of the building is made of rooms where Kerry employees figure out how to best reproduce what they made in the lab.

"Nothing is worse than developing a product in the lab and finding you can't manufacture it," Roche said. "We can make all our mistakes here first."

Several of the rooms, which are devoted to different types of products (baking, sauces and cereal, for example), are still waiting for equipment as workers continue the move-in process, Roche said.

Another corridor contains rooms that give Kerry's customers a chance to test the production process Kerry created.

Products made in these first-floor rooms go to the consumer for evaluation, Roche said, pointing out the consumer sensory room.

There, people are given unlabeled samples in clear jars. Computers are available for them to record their feedback, and a one-way mirror gives Kerry's customers an opportunity to listen and watch the testers' reactions.

Cubicles for sales, management and other employees are located on the second, third and fourth floors, as are the laboratories for product development.

Other features on those floors include meeting rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows and suites that let customers view and test their product in a more natural environment. For example, Floor 4 has a residential suite designed to look like a home kitchen, Floor 3 has a restaurant suite designed to look like a commercial kitchen, and Floor 2 has a beverage suite.

By moving the company's product development to one place (its manufacturing plants remain where they were), Roche said, ideas and productivity should increase.

"We're just expecting it to produce," he said.