

LIFE

Construction progressing

New facility to up capacity to fight hunger in south Georgia

Staff report

Construction work began in September on the newest base in the fight against hunger in South Georgia. Second Harvest of South Georgia, the leading domestic hunger-relief agency in the region, kicked off construction in the fall on a new distribution facility in Thomasville.

Construction is progressing well, and a spring opening is anticipated.

This new 65,000 sf building will include a dry warehouse, cooler/freezer/cold dock spaces, a Kids Café kitchen, and administrative spaces. It will feature an indoor/outdoor marketplace, allowing partner agencies to "shop" in a more customer-friendly/less industrial feeling space. It will also include volunteer training and work spaces, as well as a multi-purpose room that will be open for use by various community organizations.



Submitted photos

This new 65,000 sf building will include a dry warehouse, cooler/freezer/cold dock spaces, a Kids Café kitchen, and administrative spaces.

The effect that this new warehouse will have on Second Harvest and its operations will be dramatic. The increased capacity afforded by the new facility will enable us to do more to make affordable, nutritious food more easily accessible to those in South Georgia who need it most. The facility will have numerous benefits including making it possible for us to feed more kids through

our Kids' Café program, provide fresher, better product, distribute more food, serve a larger number of partner agencies, and collect more unused fruits and vegetables throughout the region from being discarded. The facility's dry warehouse storage will be able to hold up to 3,000,000 pounds of food in racking. The remainder of the storage (in the cooler, freezer and

workroom) will have capacity of up to 1,400,000. When the marketplace storage capacity is included, that is 5,000,000 pounds of food within easy reach of the people of South Georgia.

Last week, the construction team framed up the facility's commercial kitchen, in which Second Harvest staff will prepare meals and snacks for our Kids' Café program, an af-

terschool feeding program currently serving several thousand kids across Southwest Georgia. Our new kitchen will give us the ability to reach and serve up to 13,000 more children in the Thomas County area.

"We will be able to do more in our efforts to end hunger in Southwest Georgia - feed more children each day, rescue more fresh produce from area

farmers, recover more food and groceries from retail stores and supermarkets, and distribute more food through partner agencies," said Thomasville Branch Director Danny Dukus. "This new facility will replace our much smaller, out-of-date existing branch. We will be able to accomplish more - not just here in Thomas County but across our 30 county service area."

The construction is being funded by USDA Rural Development's Strike Force Initiative through a low interest loan. USDA, through its Rural Development mission area, has an active portfolio of more than \$176 billion in loans and loan guarantees. These programs are designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, farmers and ranchers and improve the quality of life in rural America.

About Second Harvest of South Georgia
Second Harvest of South Georgia serves 30 South Georgia counties and is the region's leading domestic hunger-relief charity. Headquartered in Valdosta, the organization has locations in Albany, Douglas, and Thomasville. Through our network of over 400 partner charities and through our programs, Second Harvest distributed more than 18.5 million pounds of food in 2013 to children, seniors and families struggling with hunger.

For more information on how to help alleviate hunger in South Georgia, visit online at www.feedingsga.org.

A New Second Harvest of South Georgia Distribution Center - Thomasville, GA

