Chobani Celebrates Opening Of Twin Falls Plant

The Associated Press

TWIN FALLS, Idaho (AP) — The new Chobani yogurt plant in Twin Falls opened in grand fashion Monday, with appearances from company executives, Idaho political leaders, Olympic athletes and a marching band.

After nearly a year of construction and planning, the New York-based Greek yogurt maker celebrated the opening of one of the biggest yogurt plants in the world in the heart of Idaho's milk producing region.

"I can't thank you enough for building Chobani in Idaho," said Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter, who encouraged Idahoans to welcome the company and eat more Chobani products.

Company officials say the 950,000-square-foot, $450 million facility will produce 4.2 million cases of yogurt products each week and provide a Western presence for the growing company. For now, the company has a workforce of about 300 employees, but officials told the Times-News (http://bit.ly/U5jf8w [1]) the goal is to double the payroll by the end of next year as more products are researched and developed.

"First and foremost, we obviously have to get what we've built going," said Kyle O'Brien, Chobani Inc.'s vice president of sales.

The company is already producing three new product lines at the Magic Valley plant, located on 200 acres near Twin Falls.

Chobani CEO Hamdi Ulukaya called it a memorable day for Idaho and the economy.

"We believe that no other yogurt facility is comparable to the size, technology and efficiency displayed in our new Twin Falls site," said Ulukaya, Chobani's founder. "It's a historic day for so many reasons."

Others on hand included Lauren Cheney, a member of the U.S. women's gold medal soccer team; Steven Lopez, a gold medalist in taekwondo; and Allison Jones, a gold medalist in skiing in the Winter Paralympics.

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