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500 new jobs coming to Claremont

By [Richard Gould](#) | Hickory Daily Record

Pierre Foods, Inc. has committed to spending \$16.8 million to expand its Claremont location by 45,000 square feet and to add an additional 500 jobs over the next three years. This will be the largest plant expansion in the company's history.

Governor Bev Perdue came to Claremont Friday to announce the new jobs and the plant expansion.

"This is our biggest expansion investment and it speaks to our commitment to Claremont and making this a world-class facility," said Pierre Foods CEO Bill Toler.

The company makes and distributes frozen sandwiches. More than 700 people work in the 125,000-square-foot Claremont plant, and they can produce more than 1 million sandwiches per day.

State and local incentives contributed to the company's decision to keep the 700 current employees in Claremont and to add an additional 500 to the work force.

The state has given the company a \$600,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund. The city of Claremont and Catawba County have contributed an additional \$600,000 grant for a total of \$1.2 million in government incentives.

Additional incentives came from Duke Energy and Catawba Valley Community College. The details of the additional incentives were not available Friday.

Pierre Foods makes sandwiches for its own brand sandwich and several national companies including Hungry Man, T.G.I. Fridays, Aunt Jemima and Smart Ones.

Perdue said North Carolina's economy has begun to recover but the process will be long and difficult. She said she's committed to do all she can to help the process and bringing new jobs to the state while protecting existing ones.

"We will go anywhere in the country or the world to bring jobs to you," she said. "For North Carolina, there really are rosy days ahead."

The average salary for the 500 new positions will be \$26,000. The new jobs will include sandwich assemblers, packing area workers, bakery technicians and plant supervisors.