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Conte Luna Foods looks to expand

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The Philadelphia Macaroni Co.'s pasta plant in Grand Forks, better known as Conte Luna Foods, is in need of expansion, a company official told city leaders Tuesday.

Business has been brisk the past three to five years, said executive vice president Bill Urban, and the plant needs two more silos to expand capacity.

The direction of the industry calls for more blending of different kinds of flours and additives, he said, and the new silos would allow the company to do that.

“Of all three plants we have, this has been the best for us,” he said of the Grand Forks plant.

Philadelphia Macaroni also has pasta plants in Warminster, Penn., and Spokane, Wash., and a mill in Minot. It produces pasta for “nearly every major food manufacturer in the United States and Canada,” according to its loan application.

Total project cost is estimated at \$1.5 million, \$1.2 million of which it will be borrowing from Alerus Financial. The state bank has approved a low-interest loan of \$228,000. Now the company is seeking a low-interest loan of \$123,000 from the city. The government loans would help buy down the private loan's interest rates.

Members of the Grand Forks Growth Fund Committee, which vets companies seeking financial incentives, unanimously agreed to the loan. The city's Jobs Development Authority, made up of the City Council and mayor, will have to give its final approval Monday.

The Grand Forks plant was built 20 years ago and, today, employs 86.

Philadelphia Macaroni projects that it could add another 12 this year with the new silos creating new business opportunities.

Urban said the company also is letting go of the Conte Luna name in favor of Philadelphia Macaroni's Grand Forks division.

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