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Manufacturer to bring 240 jobs to Miami County

By Thomas Gnau

DAYTON — The \$270 million nutritional drinks manufacturing plant that Abbott plans to build in Tipp City will be among the company's most important, an Abbott spokesman said.

Health goods manufacturer Abbott Laboratories said Thursday the plant will employ 240 people and produce two Abbott brands, Ensure and Glucerna, for the North American market. Groundbreaking is expected in April with the plant expected to be operational in late 2013, the company said in its announcement.

The project still depends on state and local approval of incentives to Abbott, which officials at both levels of government repeatedly refused to discuss Thursday. And the company itself was saying little about the journey that led to Tipp City.

But Gov. John Kasich said his administration made the case for the company expanding in Ohio at a time when the company — as he described the situation — was looking seriously at Indiana.

"They were really on the verge of going to Indiana," Kasich said in a phone interview Thursday. "I asked the CEO of the company (Miles White) if we could make a presentation (and) give us a chance to put our best foot forward. He said we could."

Abbott spokesman Pete Paradossi declined to discuss other locales the company eyed for the plant, but he said the company needed highway access and needed a site that was "shovel-ready."

"This plant is supplying product primarily to the North American market. We build our nutritional plants close to our customers for obvious reasons.

"It will be a significant plant within our global manufacturing network," Paradossi said.

A variety of protein and nutritional drinks are offered under the Ensure name. Glucerna helps with the management of diabetes, Paradossi said.

Publicly traded Abbott (NYSE: ABT) has its nutritional group based in Columbus. The overall company is based in the Chicago area and has about 2,500 Ohio workers, with about 91,000 employees total, Paradossi said.

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