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Renewal by Andersen's new 350,000-square-foot facility in Cottage Grove will allow the company to ramp up production on its window line. (Submitted illustration: Opus Group)

Construction starts on massive Andersen facility

By: Matt M. Johnson August 29, 2019 5:10 pm

Work has started on Andersen Corporation's largest current Minnesota plant expansion, just weeks after the city of Cottage Grove helped the window maker acquire land for it.

Opus Group is "well into" installing foundations for a 350,000-square-foot manufacturing and office building for the Renewal by Andersen subsidiary of Bayport-based Andersen Corp., said Opus senior manager Joe Mahoney. The new facility, referred to as the Value-Add Center, is under construction next to the window maker's existing 351,000-square-foot factory at 9900 Jamaica Ave. S.

Opus will begin erecting precast concrete walls of the building in September, Mahoney said in an interview this week. The facility will be complete next summer, according to Opus' website. The building will be connected to Andersen's current building with an enclosed transit way that will allow vehicles, pedestrians and materials move between the spaces, according to a city staff report.

The city approved the project in June. The single-story manufacturing, warehousing and office building is being built on about 9 acres of land Andersen previously owned, as well as a portion of a 28-acre property the company recently purchased for \$2.44 million. The seller in that transaction was the Cottage Grove Economic Development Authority, which had previously purchased the property for \$1.42 million. Both transactions took place on July 23.

The \$35 million project is also receiving \$1.25 million in grants and loans through the Minnesota Department of

Employment and Economic Development.

When the new building is complete, Andersen will add 125 employees to its current workforce of 700 at the facility, said Eliza Chlebeck, Andersen's communications director, at the June 29 meeting of the Cottage Grove Planning Commission. Those jobs will pay an average of \$21.81 per hour, according to a summary of Andersen's state financial assistance request.

The project is being undertaken as a way to "best expand our fast growing Renewal operations," Chlebeck said. The added space will give Andersen more onsite storage and space for "sequencing" the manufacturing process, according to Opus' website.

"This new facility will free up space in their existing facility and allow for future line expansions," the site states. "The new office space will include an employee training and development center; more care and trailer parking will be onsite."

The Value-Add Center is just the latest expansion at Andersen's Cottage Grove site. The company in 2015 spent \$38 million to build a 125,000-square-foot addition its original Cottage Grove building. The Value-Add Center could even be expanded. The project site has room for an additional 113,000 square feet of industrial space, said Matt Wolf, an economic development specialist with the city.

Opus has previously built in Cottage Grove, experience that helped them get the Andersen job. Opus and Hillcrest Development completed a 161,000-square-foot warehouse building at 7550 91st St. S. last fall for North Star Sheets at the Southeast Industrial Park. The building is the first of several the two developers are planning at the industrial park, which is in the southwest quadrant of Interstate 494 and Highway 10.

Andersen Corp. has made a number of significant recent expansion moves in Minnesota and elsewhere. The company undertook a \$40 million expansion of its 3 million-square-foot facility at 100 Fourth Ave. N. in Bayport last year that included 50,000 square feet of new space and the renovation of 110,000 square feet of existing space, according to Finance & Commerce archives. In 2015, the company paid \$18 million to repurpose 100,000 square feet of space to ramp up production for Andersen's 100 Series line of windows.

Andersen's most expensive current project is \$105 million, 500,000-square-foot manufacturing and distribution campus the company is developing in Goodyear, Arizona.

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Matt joined the Finance & Commerce staff in July 2016. A career journalist, he previously worked for The Bradenton Herald in Bradenton, Florida.

