

Second Harvest takes on big remodel

\$1.9 million in upgrades to increase organization's food-handling capacity

By Linn Parish

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Second Harvest Food Bank of the Inland Northwest is well under way on a \$1.9 million renovation of its main warehouse facility east of downtown Spokane.

Jason Luke Clark, Second Harvest's president and CEO, says the organization is making improvements there in stages and expects to complete the remodel of the 84,000-square-foot building, located at 1234 E. Front, next spring.

Yost, Mooney & Pugh Contractors PS, of Spokane, is the general contractor on the project. Copeland Architecture & Construction Inc., of Spokane, designed the exterior improvements, and Pondera Architecture PC, of Spokane, handled the interior remodel design.

Clark says the primary goal of the remodel is to give Second Harvest the ability to handle more food donations than it has been able to in the past. In the organization's most recent fiscal year, which ended June 30, the company processed through its system and distributed 20.7 million pounds of food. Clark says Second Harvest's goal is to be able to handle 30 million pounds of food a year.

Two key components of the remodel involve building a volunteer center within its warehouse and adding a sorting line for processing and transporting fruits and vegetables. Second Harvest currently uses what Clark refers to as a "brute-force process" for handling produce donations, which involves volunteers sorting through and transporting donated fruits and vegetables by hand. The new sorting line will include some conveyor belts for moving food more easily.

"We're not exactly putting in cutting-edge equipment, but it's great for us," Clark says.

Second Harvest handled between 7 million and 8 million pounds of fresh produce last year, and with the new system, Clark believes the organization will be able to double that.

The equipment accounts for \$150,000 of the total renovation.

The renovation project is being funded by a \$3 million capital campaign through which Second Harvest has raised about \$2 million so far, Clark says.

About \$100,000 is earmarked for future parking upgrades, and the \$1 million that's yet to be raised is expected to be used to expand the organization's food-distribution capacity, including upgrading and expanding its vehicle fleet.

Second Harvest works with more than 250 neighborhood food banks in 26 Eastern Washington and North Idaho counties. The organization has 40 employees, and on a typical day, Clark says, between 40 and 50 volunteers work at the warehouse.

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