

FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY IN NEI

90 major employers in Northeast Indiana (NEI) are in the food industry, excluding agricultural and retail establishments. Included are employees not only in food and beverage manufacturing, but also in warehousing, transportation and logistics-related employment—as well as manufacturers who produce supplies or equipment for the food industry. This industry represents 4% of the private employment in the NEI region.

Food Processing Industry

- + Dairy Product Manufacturing: fluid milk products & ice cream
- + Bakeries
- + Animal processing (specifically poultry processing)

Future Growth

- + **The Food Science Department at Purdue University** offers a pilot lab with processing/packaging capabilities, equipment design, process design, quality control and recipe management, ultrasound applications, chemical sensor evaluation, shelf-life studies, etc.
- + **Three research Centers within the Food Science Department** at Purdue dedicated to food manufacturing:
 - ↳ The Center for Food Safety Engineering
 - ↳ The Center for Integrated Food Manufacturing
 - ↳ The world-renowned Whistler Center for Carbohydrate Research
- + **The Purdue Extension Services**, with offices in every county in Indiana, offers many programs on food, food marketing, and development, in addition to other resources.
- + Purdue University's Department of Agricultural Economics also has an **"Agricultural Innovation and Commercialization Center"** which sponsors the New Ventures in Food and Agriculture along with the Purdue Extension Service.

Workforce Development

- + IPFW
- + Trine University
- + ITT Technical Institute
- + Ivy Tech Community College
- + Vincennes University
- + Harrison College - Indianapolis

Advanced Manufacturing Companies in NEI

- + Edy's Grand Ice Cream
- + Kraft Foods
- + Miller Poultry
- + Red Gold
- + Bunge North America
- + Aunt Millie's Bakeries
- + Good Humor Breyers Ice Cream
- + Living Essentials
- + Dean Foods of Decatur
- + Schenkel's All Star Dairy
- + Prairie Farms Dairy

Workforce Statistics

Occupation	Median Wage	# Employed
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Production and Operating Workers	\$22.49	3,530
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	\$17.32	3,640
Food Batchmakers	\$17.01	440
Mixing and Blending Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders	\$15.68	490
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	\$14.12	1,870
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	\$12.37	1,020
Bakers	\$11.40	320
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	\$11.15	6,730
Packers and Packagers, Hand	\$10.04	3,460
Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, Weighers	\$14.16	2,670

Incentives

Indiana Economic Development Corporation

- + EDGE and HBI tax credits
- + 21st Century Research and Technology Fund
- + Small Business Innovation Research Initiative
- + Venture Capital Investment Tax Credit

Cities and Towns

- + Tax abatements for new construction or equipment

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TODD WALLIN, VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL MANAGER

BUSINESS PROFILE

ELLISON BAKERY

Ellison Bakery's story of sweet success began way back in 1945 when Don Ellis launched a one-man operation in the family garage in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

By 1949, Ellison Bakery was producing Archway Cookies and eventually became the exclusive producer of the product for Indiana, Kentucky, and Wisconsin. In 1997, Ellison renegotiated its agreement to supply Archway cookies throughout the United States.

Prior to the renegotiation, Ellison Bakery began branching out beyond the retail cookie business, enlarging its product base to include cookie-based add-ins such as ice cream sandwich wafers and crunch products for the ice cream industry, and individually wrapped cookies for institutional food services that supply schools, hospitals, and nursing homes. They also supply the single wrapped cookies volunteers hand out to arriving passengers at the Fort Wayne International Airport. Because of this diversification, when Archway filed for bankruptcy in 2008, Ellison Bakery only lost about 10% of its business.

"We didn't have to cut any jobs due to the Archway bankruptcy," said Todd Wallin, vice president and general manager of Ellison Bakery. "Instead, we expanded our capacity and added jobs in 2008."

That expansion began in July 2006 when the company broke ground on a \$4M project that added 35,000 square feet of warehouse space to the existing building, as well as new manufacturing equipment—including hardware and software as part of the logistics system—that increased production capacity and keeps two production lines running around the clock.

Throughout the two-year expansion project, Ellison Bakery relied on the Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance to help pave the way. "In fact, I'm not sure we'd have gotten the expansion done without the Alliance," said Wallin. "They were invaluable in so many ways beyond just securing monetary incentives."

As an example of the help the Alliance provided, Wallin pointed to the building's parking lot. "Before the expansion, that land belonged to the airport and they didn't want to sell. The Alliance got involved and solved the problem to everyone's satisfaction. The airport sold the land at a reasonable price, enabling us to move forward with the project. Without that piece, the project wasn't doable. And the Alliance made it happen."

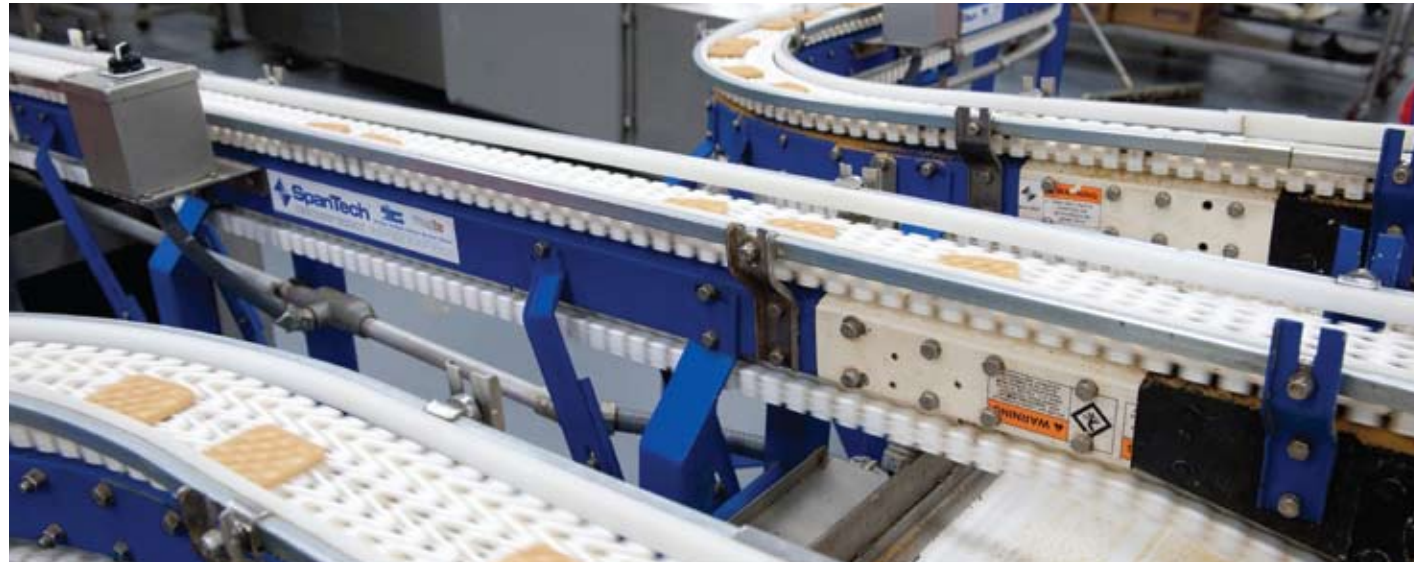
QUICK FACTS

Established: 1945 Expanded: 2007

Current Employees 85
New Hires..... 17
2009
Future Hires 15
by 4th quarter 2010

ELLISON BAKERY ALLEN COUNTY, INDIANA

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The increased capacity has enabled Ellison Bakery to further expand its product line, adding 12 premium cookie recipes to the existing ice cream add-ins and institutional product lines. In addition, because the expansion allowed the company to upgrade its facilities to meet more stringent food standards, it “opened up business we didn’t have before,” said Wallin, citing new contracts with national food conglomerates.

Because of the expansion project and the increased capacity it enabled, Ellison’s revenue rose by 38 percent in 2008, with an additional 25 percent increase so far in 2009.

“Only the Best Can Bake the Best”

Ellison Bakery has always credited its ongoing growth and success to the caliber and commitment of its employees. It is a core belief of the company that the only way to make the very best cookies is to hire the very best employees. Ellison Bakery is able to recruit nearly all of “the very best employees” locally, finding the skills and education necessary for most jobs at the plant readily available in the local workforce. Even more importantly, “The value system of folks here makes for great people and a great workforce,” said Wallin.

In the few instances when the company has had to look outside of the local area for employees, recruiting is never a problem. “Here in Fort Wayne, we can offer a small town feel with big town opportunities,” said Wallin. “The low cost of living is also a definite plus in attracting employees from other parts of the country.”

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Given that the employees are so integral to the success of the company, when Ellison Bakery planned the expansion to increase capacity, it also laid plans to make the plant even more employee friendly. “We added a new break room that’s four times the size of the old one,” said Wallin. “We also added two locker rooms and shower facilities.” The company takes great pride in the low turnover and family environment at Ellison and wants to keep it that way.

A Great Location and a Positive Environment

Ellison Bakery has been located in Fort Wayne since it first opened for business in 1945—and has no plans to relocate, ever. “We have everything we need right here,” said Wallin. “The central location makes distribution easy and convenient, the workforce is second-to-none, and the business atmosphere is definitely very proactive.

The city of Fort Wayne and especially the Alliance do everything they can to help business grow.”

The area’s many recreational and cultural attractions are a plus, as well. “I have five kids,” said Wallin, “and we spend a lot of time enjoying the outdoors. Hunting, fishing, camping, it’s all readily available right here in Allen County. Fort Wayne has a great parks system, too. You can go ice skating at Headwaters Park downtown, and there are miles of interconnected biking and hiking trails.” The area has multiple sports venues, as well, including the new downtown baseball stadium. “We had a company outing this year at Parkview Field,” said Wallin. “It’s a great place.”

For those who prefer indoor cultural activities, there is great live theater at the historic Embassy Theatre and the Civic Theatre; the Cinema Center shows independent, foreign, documentary, classic, and specialty films; and there’s a wealth of highly rated museums. “Plus, there’s always something going on at the Coliseum,” said Wallin, referring to Fort Wayne’s premier venue for sports, concerts, and events.

Plans for Continued Expansion

The expansion of Ellison’s warehouse and manufacturing space and the new retail product lines have set the scene for future growth. “We’re adding a third production line with a new oven, conveyor, and mixer,” said Wallin. “That means hiring at least 15 new employees within the next year.” ■

