

MIDAMERICA

Continued from Page A1

produce distributor. The company opened in June with six employees at MidAmerica.

North Bay Operations Manager Dan Wilson said the line workers are hired for five-month periods to help with produce shipments from outside the country, such as Chile. Following a month break between harvests, workers are hired to help with produce flown in from the opposite hemisphere of the world.

"As we increase what we are doing here, we will be hiring more people," Wilson said. "We will

have continued job hirings."

Wilson praised the facility at MidAmerica as "outstanding" and noted North Bay invested heavily in the 36,000-square-foot, refrigerated warehouse to ensure compliance with anticipated changes from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

"Everything here is thinking of the future," Wilson said. "It's definitely cutting-edge."

The county invested \$2.15 million in North Bay's local plans last year in return for taking ownership of the warehouse in 2027.

Boeing spokeswoman Chamila Jayaweera said in a statement the corporation is continually evaluating facilities and staffing to align with customer priorities and posi-

tion the company for competitive growth.

"While it would be premature to speculate on future expansion plans for the Boeing St. Clair facility at this juncture, Boeing has had preliminary discussions with county officials regarding the need for more office space to house a small number of employees," Jayaweera said.

Boeing opened its facility at MidAmerica in August 2010, Jayaweera said. The county spent \$3.5 million at that time to turn a warehouse into the assembly plant. Boeing has agreed to pay back the county's investment through its 10-year lease.

Currently, 80 employees work within an assembly and subassem-

bly plant producing equipment for the F/A-18 Hornet fighter jet, CH-47 Chinook helicopter, and C-17 Globemaster III military transport aircraft.

The success of the airport's tenants is particularly important as MidAmerica struggles to operate in the black.

The latest county audit of the airport's financial health found MidAmerica reported \$8.4 million in operating losses in 2011. However, the loss was less than the previous year's deficit of \$11.9 million.

Contact reporter Daniel Kelley at dkelley@bnd.com or 618-239-2501

'Will be hiring' at Midamerica

Produce processor has increased staff; Boeing may also add space

BY DANIEL KELLEY
News-Democrat

The business plans of two tenants at MidAmerica St. Louis Airport are bearing fruit — in one case literally.

North Bay Produce now has 30 employees sending fruit to local grocery aisles; and the Boeing Co., an international aerospace and defense corporation, is contemplating adding office space to its assembly plant at the airport.

North Bay's state-of-the-art processing line is up and running as 20 seasonal employees prep fruit for delivery to area grocery stores. The seasonal workers were in addition to the 10 people employed year-round at the

BND.COM

See a photo gallery of North Bay Produce in action

Please see MIDAMERICA, A2