

# Almond **FACTS**

JULY • AUGUST 2007 NEWS, VIEWS AND INDUSTRY INSIGHTS



Young Leaders Meet • Retail Sales Manager • Employee Appreciation

**DOWN WITH DUST**  
**OUR BEST YEAR EVER!**  
**ON TARGET IN SALIDA**





Freight haulers line up outside new, larger loading dock at Salida cold storage unit.

# On Target In Salida

## New cold storage complex opens on time, on budget

Story and photos by Gray Allen

**W**hen Blue Diamond broke ground for its big, new cold storage/distribution center in Salida last September, the plan was to move in by May 1, 2007. While major construction projects typically overshoot their targets, this one wrapped up earlier than expected. “We began moving product in on April 15,” says Darrell Nelson, Director, Engineering.

Nelson credits the timely opening to the good work of The Facility Group, a leading engineering and construction management firm hired by Blue Diamond to oversee the project. They kept things humming along on schedule while controlling costs, he said. Nelson also credits Stanislaus County building department officials with efficiently moving the project through the approval process and “being very helpful” at every stage.

### More Capacity

With over an acre and a half of floor space under roof, the new facil-

ity anticipates continued growth in crop sizes. Blue Diamond CEO Doug Youngdahl said at the groundbreaking last September, “By the end of this decade, we anticipate a 30-percent increase in bearing acres and a 50-percent increase in production. This facility will help us prepare for the larger crops to come.”

Nelson points out that the new facility design anticipates such growth by including features that allow for easy expansion.

### Innovative and Practical

Engineered to be state-of-the-art, the new facility is both innovative and practical. “We included many new features but didn’t overbuild it,” says Nelson. “It’s a good blend of new technology and cost-effectiveness.”

Kim Kennedy, General Manager, Industrial Sales and Operations, put it this way, “This distribution center has the capabilities and features to provide the best in worker and food safety, energy efficiency and climate control. It positions us for high-specification customers and their demanding requirements.”



Trucks can now be loaded in a covered, all-weather loading area.

### More Efficient

Two cold-storage rooms can store up to 20 million pounds of almonds either as finished goods in 50-pound cases or work-in-progress product in 2000-pound cardboard bins. The finished goods can be shipped directly to customers from the Salida facility. The 2000-pound bins can be shipped directly to customers or be transferred to Sacramento for manufacturing. Previously, nearly all product processed at Salida had to be shipped to Sacramento for storage and shipment. The new facility eliminates costs associated with that extra handling.

Even the floors are more efficient. Nelson explains that the floors are seamless – one vast expanse of concrete without the usual expansion joints. “We eliminated over a mile of expansion joints, which reduces wear and tear on our forklifts while also making the facility more sanitary.” Expansion joints and other seams or cracks collect foreign material that has to be removed to maintain a sanitary facility, he explains.

A unique feature of the acre and a half of uninterrupted concrete is the finish to its surface. Granite chips were troweled into the cement to make the surface harder and more durable, and more sanitary, than conventional concrete.

### More Winning Features:

- Insulated metal wall panels instead of standard construction methods provide efficient climate control while saving a half million in construction costs.
- Quick-charge forklifts eliminate time-consuming battery removal



*The state-of-the-art cold storage unit houses brown almonds awaiting processing as well as finished product ready for shipment*



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- Redundant chillers reduce wear and tear on the refrigeration equipment, thus less maintenance and less downtime for repairs.
- High-speed doors in the staging area and cold-storage rooms increase cooling efficiency by minimizing loss of chilled air as forklifts exit and re-enter the building.
- Controlled lighting with motion sensors reduces electrical usage. Lights switch on and turn off by zones when the sensors detect activity or the lack thereof.
- Exterior lighting is mounted on poles away from the building to keep insects away from entrances and from the stored product.
- Hand-held scanners operating on radio signals allow forklift drivers to manage inventory accurately and much more efficiently, without the usual paperwork. ▶

# Potted or Bareroot

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- Security cameras inside and outside protect the product and personnel from unwanted intrusion.
- The latest in personal sanitation facilities ensures product cleanliness and safety.
- Efficient traffic flow was designed into the layout of buildings and roadways, and reduces congestion in the Salida plant receiving area.
- A canopy-covered loading area enables truckers to load their rigs out of the weather.

The new cold storage/distribution center at Salida is another step forward in Blue Diamond's aggressive program of continuous improvement. The process began five and a half years ago has seen major improvements in efficiency and product quality in both the Sacramento and Salida plants.

And there's more to come, says Nelson. "We have begun work on significant upgrades to the receiving yard at Salida. We're installing three new truck scales and making other changes that will cut the time required for grower deliveries substantially. We are on schedule to have it ready for the 2007 crop."

Additionally, laser technology upgrades are being made to the main production lines to improve operating efficiency. And new packaging lines are being installed in Sacramento to deliver new products recently developed by Blue Diamond as part of our expanding retail sales plans.

The design enhancements underway are aimed at achieving our facility vision statement for the Salida facility of: "Designing the most highly effective brown almond receiving, processing and distribution facility in the world."

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