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Nestle says its future in Bridgewater will be sweet

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(Photo: Mike Deak)

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BRIDGEWATER - Nestle had its choice of locating its Nestle Health Science business anywhere in the world, but the world's biggest food company chose Somerset County.

That means the county's economy is about to get sweeter, especially if more hotels are built to accommodate the number of visitors the company is expecting, Anders Kaspersson, Nestlé Health Science's vice president and program manager for research and development, said at Monday's grand opening of the refurbished Somerset County Business Partnership's Business Resource and Visitors Center.

"We will have visitors from all over the world," he said, adding that the county's "hotel situation is horrible."

Nestle Health Science, which focuses on the connection between nutrition and health management, will be opening a 180,000-square-foot research-and-development facility in the corporate campus on Route 202-206 that once housed Sanofi U.S. and is now owned by Advance Realty and CrossHarbor Capital Partners. The 110-acre site between Route 202-206 and Interstate 287, is known as the Center of Excellence.,

Kaspersson said Switzerland-based Nestle, with a net worth of about \$249 billion, hopes to move into the facility in about eight months.

One of the reasons Nestle chose Somerset County, Kaspersson said, is the county's location in the state's "bioscience corridor" where there is a rich supply of "competent and capable" workers.

"It's a perfect fit," he said.

Besides more hotel space for its visitors, Nestle would also like to see direct train service to New York City on NJ Transit's Raritan Valley Line, Kaspersson said.

"It's a huge plus being near New York City, " he said.

Lt. Gov. Kim Guadagno said that Somerset County's positive attitude toward business is "a great New Jersey story."

"Everyone here sees the possibilities, not the obstacles," she said.

Peter J. Cocozziello, founder and CEO of Advance Realty, said that Somerset County is creating "global-type amenities to attract global companies" like Nestle.



Cocoziello, who noted that Advance has developed one million square feet in Somerset County in the last three decades, said that as the global business landscape has changed, the landscape in Somerset County has changed as well.

Nestle will renovate a building that once served as a research center for Sanofi as a product technology center for the development of nutritional health management therapies.

Nestlé joins Ashland and Kashiv Pharma at the state-of-the-art complex, which has been designated by Bridgewater as a redevelopment area. Plans call for the property to have a variety of uses, including retail, hotel accommodations and multifamily housing in a "live-work-play" community.

Michael Kerwin, president of the Somerset County Business Partnership, said Nestle's decision to locate in Somerset County is a vote of confidence.

"Somerset County is for winners," he said. "We are working together to get things done."

As an example of this, Kerwin noted that the Business Partnership has designed the new office space at its North Bridge Street headquarters to allow members to utilize desk space, access Wi-fi, and reserve conference space as a virtual office to be used as needed.

The office also will be a clearinghouse for information not only to attract businesses to Somerset County, but also to enhance its image as a tourist destination.