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Reason for optimism

Research expansion good for Kellogg and B.C.

Many people have been working very hard to make Battle Creek an international center for food research, safety training and related industries. It is an exciting vision that could help transform downtown and our local economy.

To date, the work largely has been preparatory and theoretical.

But now we have a very tangible symbol of what the future could hold for Battle Creek.

Tuesday's official opening of the expansion of the W.K. Kellogg Institute for Food and Nutrition Research marked more than the completion of a major construction project. The 197,000-square-foot addition represents not only a \$54 million investment by Kellogg Co., but a substantial push forward in the company's ability to develop new products and enhance its nutritional expertise.

The fact that products created over the past three years represented 15 percent of Kellogg's sales last year underscores the importance of the company remaining on the cutting edge of food and nutrition research and development. Continuing to provide innovative new products is essential for Kellogg's future success and growth.

The expanded institute allows Kellogg to bring together all of its area food science and product development workers at one site and provide them with the facilities they need to help Kellogg remain an industrial leader. Its open design will help encourage the exchange of ideas and concepts, and its LEED-certified construction demonstrates Kellogg's commitment to the environment and energy efficiency.

For the community, the institute's expansion is reason for optimism that Battle Creek can become a hub for companies interested in pursuing food science and ensuring product safety for consumers.

Battle Creek Unlimited's plan to transform downtown Battle Creek into such a center won't happen overnight, and there are bound to be bumps along the way.

But Tuesday's opening of the newly expanded W.K. Kellogg Institute should remind all of us that better times lie ahead if we unite and stay focused on a common vision.