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## Progress: New Kellogg expansion taking shape

*Elizabeth Willis*  
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The world's largest cereal maker is in the midst of a \$54 million expansion of its W.K. Kellogg Institute for Food and Nutrition Research on Hamblin Street southeast of its global headquarters.

The addition has started to take shape with steel outlining its 157,000-square-foot girth and now bricks and glass over its frame. Kellogg Co. is investing about \$40 million into the building and another \$14 million in technology and equipment.

"It's a very good time to see the cranes in Battle Creek," said Battle Creek Mayor Mark Behnke. "We're hoping to see more of them in the future."

Kellogg expects construction to be complete in September, on schedule and on budget, despite a soured economy, said Kellogg President and Chief Executive Officer David Mackay after the company's annual shareholder meeting April 24.

It is expected to draw a highly skilled workforce and can accommodate up to 300 employees.

But there is still no official word on if those will be new jobs, and if so, when they might be realized in a city hungry for work.

"When we announced it we said this wasn't going to mean an increase in jobs. It may, but we're not committed to anything," Mackay said.

It is more likely that employees from Kellogg's Porter Street office complex will move into the newly renovated space before new people are hired.

"Some people will move into the new office space that goes with that and that will be the only move this year I suspect," Mackay said during an interview with the Enquirer following Kellogg's first quarter earnings report April 30. "It is amazing that you could be a mile apart and it does impact on the quality and depth of communications. It's unfortunate, but it's just a fact of life."

The expansion will allow more of Kellogg's research and development team, including quality and engineering experts, to work under one roof.

"I think it's so much easier if you can wander down the corridor and have casual conversations with people on things that can relate to R&D (research and development) or engineering or packaging or whatever, and just facilitating that typically has worked incredibly well," Mackay said.

Battle Creek, which is already home to Kellogg's largest research and development group, will become its undoubted global hub for the next generation of new products and manufacturing.

Mackay said Kellogg's other, smaller research institutions around the world are not likely to scale down their operations as a result of Battle Creek's expansion.

"Because a lot of them are small, but we're always looking at and considering ways to optimize what we do," Mackay said.

City Manager Ken Tsuchiyama called the expansion "very important" to Battle Creek, especially during this recession.

"The fact that the Kellogg Co. is moving forward with the project provides an indication that the company is managing through this period well and is positioning itself for the future," he said in an e-mail. "This bodes well for not only the company, but for the Battle Creek community as well and we appreciate their continued investment in the community."

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