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## Weber-Stephen global distribution center broke ground Friday

HUNTLEY – A project slated to bring nearly 500 jobs to the Huntley area is officially underway after a groundbreaking ceremony Friday.

The event marked the beginning of a two-fold project to build the much-anticipated Weber-Stephen Products LLC global distribution center – a 750,120-square-foot facility that will consolidate Weber Grill distribution operations from four states, according to a news release from the governor's office.

"The global distribution center is one of the largest industrial facilities to commence construction in 2014," said Ryan O'Leary of Duke Realty, a partner working with Weber on the project.

The size of the facility and the partnership with the village of Huntley is a shining example of how more jobs can be brought into the state and its communities, Quinn said Friday to an enthusiastic crowd.

"This opportunity [is] so very special to our state," he said. "There have been lots of Illinoisans involved since day one."

Weber-Stephens executive chairman Jim Stephens said every Weber grill, with the exception of one model, has been manufactured and/or assembled in Illinois.

The company's partnership with Huntley began when its existing facility opened in 1996.

"We're pleased [the global distribution center] is in Huntley because this is home," Stephens said.

In addition to the new center, the project also calls for the expansion of the existing Weber facility in Huntley.

The center itself will bring about 75 jobs, Village President Charles Sass said, and the expanded manufactur-



*Gov. Pat Quinn (left) talks with James Stephen, executive chairman of Weber-Stephen Products, a groundbreaking ceremony Friday for Weber-Stephen Products global distribution center in Huntley*

ing facility is expected to bring more than 400 jobs to the area.

"Weber-Stephen has been a great corporate citizen in Huntley for nearly 20 years," Sass said. "We're excited to grow with them as they expand their operations and bring new jobs to the community."

Huntley expected monumental projects to come to the village after the Route 47-Interstate 90 interchange was completed last year, Sass added.

"This is exactly what we anticipated," he said. "We see the community continuing to grow. There's a big demand for more restaurants."

While the groundbreaking took place Friday, the efforts behind the project began at the start of the year. Since then, Sass said the people of Huntley have worked quickly to annex the land on which the facility will be built.

The plan, he added, has the global distribution center up and running in the spring. It should be completed by September 2015.



*Gov. Pat Quinn (left) talks Friday with Bill Keeley, owner of Keeley Construction, at a groundbreaking ceremony for Weber-Stephen Products global distribution center in Huntley.*