

# **TCEDA Announces New Poultry Processing Facility to Locate in Tuscaloosa**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Tuscaloosa, Ala. – Fit Foodz is investing more than \$15 million and is expected to create 180 new jobs in Tuscaloosa, the Tuscaloosa County Economic Development Authority announced Thursday.

The creation of the new poultry processing operation is a good fit in Tuscaloosa, because it allows the company to utilize a deep and talented workforce and it allows for expansion capabilities, city and company officials said.

“The deep pocket of talent, the colleges and university that adds so significantly to that, a tremendous living environment and the amazing people we’ve met there really made Tuscaloosa an ideal location for us,” said Lenna Castagna, president and founder of Fit Foodz. “It is a great location in a great community, and we will have plenty of room to expand.”

Fit Foodz has operations around the globe, including Japan, Guam and in Europe. The new facility in Tuscaloosa will allow them to better serve its U.S. customers, Castagna said.

“The introduction of Fit Foodz to our community will add to our existing poultry business base while introducing a new corporate citizen to support our continued economic growth,” said Norman Crow, chairman for Tuscaloosa County Economic Development Authority.

Fit Foodz focuses on the delivery of healthy chicken products for the food service and retail sectors. Company officials said the new facility in Tuscaloosa will allow it to keep pace with the company’s growing global market demands.

The new facility will include a raw processing line and a fully-cook line, with each employing two shifts. It will be located on 7 acres at 2773 39<sup>th</sup> Street in Tuscaloosa. The company plans to expand the footprint of the existing building already on site. Construction on the expansion is slated to begin in the third quarter of 2022.

“I’m pleased to help welcome our newest corporate citizen, Fit Foodz, to Tuscaloosa,” Mayor Walt Maddox said. “The opening of a Fit Foodz location in our City supports the community’s efforts to diversify our business base and job availability for our citizens. The approximately 180 jobs that will be created upon the opening of this location are well-paying jobs for a range of skill levels, and represent an excellent opportunity for our workforce.”

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The Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority, which does business as the Tuscaloosa County Economic Development Authority, approved a tax abatement package as part of an investment by Fit Foodz that will establish the company's new location in the southeast United States to support existing contracts with the U.S. government and future company growth. The Authority's board of directors approved the package Thursday afternoon during its July meeting.

The company will receive an abatement of the non-educational sales and use taxes for purchases of equipment and building materials during the construction phase of the project and an abatement of the non-educational ad valorem taxes on certain real and personal property for up to 10 years. The project will invest more than \$15 million in land, building, and equipment. The company expects to complete hiring of the 180 hourly and salaried jobs by the end of year three of operations.

"This new investment by Fit Foodz represents an opportunity for us to grow an industry sector that has a long history in our county and region," said Judge Rob Robertson, chairman of the Tuscaloosa County Commission. "The company specializes in developing healthy poultry options, which is an approach on trend with consumer demands."

Authority officials say the company will be eligible for tax abatements in an estimated amount of \$1,083,752. During the first 10 years of operations, the project is estimated to contribute \$910,031 in tax revenue in non-abated taxes, including education taxes, from initial purchases alone. TCEDA estimates the project will contribute almost \$13 million during its first 20 years in certain taxes generated from the company and direct employee spending, identified through the Authority's standard evaluation process.

For more information on Fit Foodz, please visit <https://fitfoodz.com/>.

#### ***About Fit Foodz***

Fit Foodz is a small, female owner-operated company that is committed to delivering pre-cooked healthy and delicious chicken products. The company has a personal stake in the complete satisfaction of its customers and first-hand knowledge of all company operations from contract to consumption. Fit Foodz was established in 2000 and is a woman and minority owned business. The company has headquarters in Atlanta and operations globally.



#### ***About TCIDA/TCEDA***

The Tuscaloosa County Industrial Development Authority, dba the Tuscaloosa County Economic Development Authority, is the economic development agency for all jurisdictions within Tuscaloosa County, Alabama and is a one stop source for accessing site location data including available sites and buildings, financing, employee training, and incentives for manufacturing, technology and knowledge-based investments.

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