



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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Governor Shapiro Announces \$3 Million Investment in Erie County Organic Potato Company to Create Local Jobs and Grow Pennsylvania's Agricultural Sector

This investment in Folkland Foods exemplifies Governor Josh Shapiro's strategy to drive economic growth in Pennsylvania, create sustainable local jobs, and ensure the Commonwealth is a national leader in agriculture



Waterford, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** visited start-up company **Folkland Foods**, located in Waterford, Erie County, to announce a **\$3 million Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP)** investment in the company. This funding will support a significant capital expansion that will enable Folkland's parent company Troyer, Inc. — the only organic potato supplier on the East Coast — to expand its operations, transition more

acreage to organic farming, and begin producing a range of potato products, creating up to 50 new local jobs in the region over the first three years.

Owned and operated by the Troyer family, who have been a mainstay in northwestern Pennsylvania's potato farming industry for three generations, Folkland Foods is poised to build on its legacy of agricultural success and pioneering role in organic farming.

"I'm excited to announce this \$3 million investment in Folkland Foods, a company that is leading the way in organic farming and sustainable practices, built on hard work and know-how developed right here in Pennsylvania. This expansion will create 50 new, good-paying jobs and significantly boost the local economy in Erie County, all while reinforcing Pennsylvania's reputation as a leader in agriculture and food production," said **Governor Shapiro**. "My Administration is committed to making targeted investments like this one that benefit our farmers, strengthen rural economies, and ensure Pennsylvania remains at the forefront of agricultural innovation and production for generations to come."

The RACP grant funding will help defray construction costs for the new facilities required to manufacture frozen potato products and build a potato storage warehouse. The full project, with a total cost of \$7 million, includes a wastewater treatment plant for storing, treating, and transporting wastewater and site improvements – including driveways, parking lots, and outside lighting – as well as:

- An 8,100-square-foot addition to the existing facility to house manufacturing and ancillary equipment;
- A 3,600-square-foot addition for a freezer warehouse to store frozen finished goods; and
- A 16,000-square-foot potato warehouse to store raw potatoes and ensure year-round availability.

"Two generations ago, a couple of Pennsylvania Mennonite farm boys started with a simple idea on this farm: grow potatoes, make potato chips. Simple in design, undoubtedly complex in execution, but the brothers built a well-loved business and found great success," said **Zack Troyer, co-founder of Folkland Foods**. "Our intention today is to honor that legacy and use the good fortunes and lessons to create new opportunity in our community and state. Our vision for Folkland Foods is as simple as my grandfather's: grow organic potatoes, make french fries. We took a huge leap, betting the farm that we could make clean organic food, and create meaningful, sustaining jobs. We are humbled to have Governor Shapiro's support and intend to pay it forward by putting Pennsylvania on the map as a leader in organic food, regenerative farming, and mission-driven business."

The project is currently under construction and is expected to begin processing potatoes for retail sale early next year. Folkland Foods will produce a line of organic, minimally

processed potato products, starting with organic farm fries in three flavors. Future product offerings will include potato puffs, sweet potato items, and roasties.

In addition to creating up to 50 new local jobs across various sectors – including entry-level positions, engineering, sales and marketing, human resources, finance, and technical roles – the project will have a significant economic impact on the region. The company is committed to sourcing materials locally and employing sustainable practices throughout its operations.

The expansion will also allow Folkland Foods to teach regional farmers how to cultivate organic vegetables by sharing best practices and methods learned over generations of organic farming, further enhancing local agriculture, agricultural innovation, and community support.

"Folkland's vision is to offer products that have minimal ingredients, so consumers know exactly what is in the product," said **Brian Garlick, Folkland's Chief Operating Officer and longtime Troyer, Inc. employee.** "All simple ingredients that you would find in your cupboards at home. Full ingredient transparency is hard to find today and eliminating pesticides used in conventional farming practices is the first step in providing a 'better-for-you' product. One thing I can say that I've learned over the last year working with the third-generation of Troyer farmers: the apple hasn't fallen far from the tree. I see the same commitment to community, to family, and an unwavering commitment to their employees. I'm thrilled to be part of Folkland and excited to work side-by-side with the Troyer family again."

The Troyers previously founded the Troyer Farms Potato Chip Company, which they owned and operated from 1967 to 2008.

Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding joined Governor Shapiro and local leaders for a tour of Folkland, where they saw the ongoing construction and discussed the future impact of the company's expansion on Erie County and beyond.

"Folkland Foods exemplifies Pennsylvania's innovative spirit in agriculture by transforming the potato industry with new products and market channels," said **Secretary Redding.** "The Troyer family's vision not only supports farmers but also highlights the vast opportunities for food businesses in our state. In response to growing consumer demand for organic products, this investment aligns with Governor Shapiro's initiatives like PA Preferred Organic™ and the Organic Center of Excellence, driving growth and fostering sustainability – putting agriculture at the forefront of his Administration's plan to make Pennsylvania the place for business."

The Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) is a Commonwealth reimbursement grant program administered by the Office of the Budget for the design, acquisition, and construction of regional economic, cultural, civic, recreational, and

historical improvement projects. RACP projects have a significant impact on the region's economy, generating employment and boosting local tax revenues. RACP helps fund vital regional projects, like Folkland Foods' expansion, that drive local economies and create jobs.

Governor Shapiro's [Economic Development Strategy](#), the first plan of its kind for Pennsylvania in almost 20 years, focuses on key sectors like Agriculture, Energy, Life Sciences, Manufacturing, and Robotics & Technology to reignite Pennsylvania's economy. Since taking office, the **Shapiro Administration** has secured over \$2 billion in private sector investments.

Last month, **Governor Shapiro** and **Secretary Redding** [highlighted investments in agricultural innovation](#) secured in the [2024-25 budget](#) – including the **first-of-its-kind in the nation \$10 million Agricultural Innovation Grant Program** to help support new solutions and technologies to build the future of American agriculture right here in Pennsylvania.

Read more about how this plan and the Governor's budget will [create economic opportunity](#) for all Pennsylvanians.

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**Election Day
Nov. 5, 2024**



Election day is Nov. 5. Find your polling place or return your mail ballot by 8 p.m. Nov. 5. Visit vote.pa.gov for trusted election information.