

Smfd. Foods will provide frozen product to COP

By Diana McFarland
News editor

Smithfield Foods plans to pay for new walk-in freezers, and then provide a steady supply of meat for Christian Outreach's food distribution program.

The freezers, and related construction costs, are estimated to cost \$80,000. The meat, which will include bacon, hot dogs and other packaged meats, are products that are too close to the expiration date to go through the typical distribution system, but still safe to eat, said Smithfield Foods President and CEO C. Larry Pope.



Breaking ground for the freezers to be installed at the new Christian Outreach facility on Grace Street in Smithfield are, from left, COP Board of Directors Chairman Wayne Farmer, COP President Charlie Setiz, COP Building Team member Carter Williams and Smithfield Foods President and CEO C. Larry Pope. The freezers and necessary building additions are being paid for by Smithfield Foods.

Although Foods was recently sold to Hong Kong-based Shuanghui, the new owners want the company to continue contributing to the community as it has in the past, Pope said.

"The town of Smithfield has nothing to worry about," said Pope. Prior to the closing of the sale in September, many town residents were concerned that Foods would stop being a major contributor to the town, but Pope has repeatedly said that support would continue.

The meat donated to Christian Outreach will either be distributed within three to four days or frozen for up to two weeks, said

• See COP, p. 9

COP

• Continued from p. 1

COP President Charlie Setiz.

The freezers will be installed on the rear of the new COP building, now located in the former Isle of Wight Health Department building on Grace Street.

Christian Outreach is in the midst of a \$600,000 building campaign, and has so far raised \$425,000. Part of the funding has come from grants from Obici Health Foundation and the Hampton Roads Foundation, as well as the town of Smithfield and community donations.

The money is being used to add a new hip roof, which was recently installed, as well as to fix the heating and air-conditioning system and other building modifications. The donation from Smithfield

Foods is included in the current total.

Christian Outreach is currently located in an unheated, un-air conditioned building in the county's industrial park off Route 10. The new location at 402 Grace St. is expected to boost volunteerism and make it easier to access for those in need, organizers said.

Last year, Christian Outreach provided food for 400 to 600 families a month in Isle of Wight County. The families are selected through Isle of Wight Social Services, Setiz said.

Christian Outreach began in 1991 when a group of churches got together to raise money for those needing help with winter fuel costs. The first fundraiser was Souper Saturday, which continues today and raises more than \$10,000 towards fuel assistance

each year.

COP also manages nine other programs, including the Angel Tree, dental assistance, donated cars, prescription assistance, student assistance, emergency assistance, the food pantry, medical transportation, home repair handicap ramps and helps with the Isle of Wight Count Appointed Special Advocate Program which assists abused and neglected children in the court system.

Those wanting to donate or learn more about Christian Outreach can visit the website at www.iowcop.org. Donations can be made online or by mail to Christian Outreach Program, PO Box 253, Smithfield, VA 23431.

All donations are tax deductible and those who donate will receive a receipt. For more information call 238-9506.

