

SAVANNAH now

Published on SavannahNow.com (<http://savannahnow.com>)

Target opened its third distribution center in the state on Wednesday

By Christian Livermore
Created 2007-08-02 06:39

MIDWAY - The 1.5 million-square-foot distribution center that Target cut the ribbon on Wednesday marks the third warehouse the company owns in Georgia. It's already got a 2 million-square-foot location in Savannah and a 1.5 million-square-foot one in Tifton.

So what's with all the warehouses so close together?
Simple.

They serve different purposes, said Mitch Stover, senior vice president for Distribution Services.

The Savannah location handles cargo coming off ships at the Port of Savannah. The Tifton and Midway locations ship that merchandise off to Target's retail stores.

The Midway center, located in Liberty County's 4,700 acre MidCoast Business Center just off Interstate 95, will serve stores from Miami to South Carolina.

And with Target planning to open a number of new stores in the market in the next two years, the Midway location is situated to serve them all. Stover would not say where the new stores would go, but Target recently opened one in Brunswick and is set to open another in Savannah this fall.

"Georgia itself is going to be a big part of our growth in the future," Stover said.

Target also likes the idea of having a high concentration of warehouses and stores in an area, Stover said.

"We're better known, we have a bigger impact for recruiting," he said. "We have the same thing in Southern California. We'd just rather have a bigger impact in a community and a bigger draw."

Perhaps most telling for south Georgia's business climate is that the Midway center will service Florida, said Lynn Pitts, senior vice president of the Savannah Economic Development Authority. Putting the facility in Florida would have been more central to the market it would serve, but state and local officials in Liberty convinced Target that it could do that more cheaply in Georgia.

"We're close enough, and Georgia is a cheaper state to do business," Pitts said.

Target officials were initially skeptical about locating in Midway, Stover said.

His biggest concern was whether there would be enough qualified workers to staff the warehouse because

of the plethora of other distribution centers competing for labor.

State and local officials worked hard to woo Target. Along with standard state tax credits for each job created, they offered \$3 million in grant money from the state's tobacco settlement funds and \$1 million in road improvements. Savannah Technical College also provided job training.

"They were very aggressive in getting the jobs to Georgia," Stover said.

For its part, local officials are happy not only about the jobs, but about what having a Target distribution center says to other potential employers about the community.

"It serves as a great beacon of awareness," said Ron Tolley, CEO of the Liberty County Development Authority, "for this business center and the work force."

Source URL:

<http://savannahnow.com/node/336633>



From Left; John Kerns, outbound senior group leader; Marco Furforo, general manager; Mitch Stover, senior vice president for distribution for Target Corporation; Sen. Eric Johnson; Mike West, Region 3 director of distribution; and Amanda Martin, human resources manager, cut the ribbon at Target's distribution center warehouse Wednesday in Midway.