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Amazon is planning an 800,000-sq.-ft. facility in Jacksonville.

Logistics Boost

An Amazon facility bolsters Jacksonville's standing as a logistics center.

Jacksonville economic development officials had several reasons to tout Amazon's plans to build an 800,000-sq.-ft. fulfillment center, starting with the 1,500 jobs it expects to bring — “the single largest jobs announce-

ment in Jacksonville's history,” says Jerry Mallot, president of JAXUSA Partnership.

The Amazon facility also is significant because in a city that touts itself as a logistics center, most of the big job announcements over the past

two decades in Jacksonville have focused on back-office functions for major financial services firms, including Citigroup, Bank of America and Deutsche Bank. Walmart added 600 logistics jobs at its Northeast Florida distribution center in 2007.

Also noteworthy is Amazon's location in north Jacksonville, because most of the city's ma-

ior job expansions have come in office parks on the Southside. While the Jacksonville area's unemployment rate has dropped below 5%, documents filed with the city for the Amazon project show some neighborhoods near the site have unemployment exceeding 15%.

Amazon expects to open the facility in time for the 2017 holiday season.

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Officials in Suwannee County and Live Oak are petitioning Amtrak and the Southern Rail Commission (SRC) to make Live Oak a stop as passenger rail service is restored between New Orleans and Jacksonville. No passenger train has run on the line since Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005. Suwannee County Economic Development Director Dr. Alvin B. Jackson, Jr. says a stop at Live Oak, near the crossroads of I-75 and I-10, would generate between \$12.25 and \$12.72 million annually for Amtrak. SRC officials project 138,300 passengers would use the Live Oak station, which would cost only \$5.48 million annually to run. Information is available at AllAboardLiveOak.com.



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