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## **FORTUNE 500 COMPANY EXPANDS IN WATERLOO, IOWA Center starts up, Grainger breaks ground**

**By JOHN MOLSEED, Courier Staff Writer**

WATERLOO --- For industrial supply company Grainger Inc., a groundbreaking ceremony symbolizes the beginning of work on a new 41,000-square-foot call center.

To Waterloo city leaders, the project is a keystone to what they hope will blossom into a bustling office park.

The site, Country Club Business Plaza east of Ansborough between San Marnan Drive and U.S. Highway 20, is an area city leaders hoped would develop into a professional plaza after the Ansborough interchange opened a little more than a year ago.

"It builds some momentum," Mayor Tim Hurley said. "This is exactly what we want to see here."

Built on a 38-acre site, the project also gives the company room to expand in the future if needed.

The construction project has a valuation of \$5.2 million according to the city inspection office.

The ceremony also shows Grainger's commitment to keep a sizable part of their operation in the area, said Grainger Vice President of Operations Parris Devine.

"We're saying we're here permanently," he said.

Grainger, based in Lake Forest, Ill., has been leasing space for the Waterloo call center since 1991, Devine said. He said the center receives good customer response.

The center handles calls for technical support of questions from Grainger customers. Grainger supplies industrial and technical products for nearly 1.8 million customers around the world.

Tim Cuvelier, service center manager, said the commitment the company is making to stay in Waterloo reflects the employees' dedication.

"I think it says that the employees have a good work ethic and focus on the customer," Cuvelier said.

"To transport these goals somewhere else makes no sense," Devine said. "If you're going to stay long-term, it makes sense to buy."

Grainger is a Fortune 500 company that did \$6.4 billion in sales last year.

The building is also designed to minimize its environmental impact and will be built to environmental standards set by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design.

Grainger officials said the building will likely be completed in the summer of 2009.