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*First expansion in six years***P&G officials praise support of provincial, city governments****• Continued from page A1.**

He thanked both the provincial government and Belleville city council "for their tremendous support for this project."

It was a sentiment shared by Belleville plant manager Can Akcadag.

"Without the support of the Ontario government and the city of Belleville, this announcement wouldn't have been possible," he said. "Together, we are making Belleville a great place to live and work."

He said the expansion project "has been a long time in waiting."

First established in Belleville in 1975 to produce diapers, P & G has since become the manufacturer of feminine care products under the Always brand name — which accounts for 85 per cent of its annual production — for the North American market and Olay Daily Facials for the global market.

The Belleville plant currently employs more than 600 full-time and temporary workers and exports more than 90 per cent of its products to 11 countries.

The \$40 million expansion will consist of the addition of new production lines in its existing plant as well as the construction of a new 40,000 square foot plant just east of the main operation.

Work has already started on the new manufacturing facility and it will be fully operational by 2008.

Twenty-five of the 100 new employees have already started working on the new production lines in the existing plant. The rest will be hired over the next several months.

Plant manager Akcadag said the local operation is proud to receive this new investment "to improve our product offering and to continue to develop Belleville as a key site for P & G."

"Our employees have proven their ability to deliver results in this competitive marketplace as we are the only site that manufactures Always in North America. Our partnerships with government and local stakeholders have been a key to our success, he said.

Akcadag said about \$25 million in new economic activity will be

generated for the local area by the plant's expansion.

Belleville Mayor Mary-Anne Sills, said P&G's expansion is extremely important to the economic well-being of the city.

"Procter and Gamble has been a longstanding partner and active contributor in the city of Belleville. As they continue to grow, we look forward to attracting even more new economic activity which will improve the quality of life in our community," she said.

Sills also applauded the provincial government's commitment to the expansion project on behalf of the city and the entire region.

Prince Edward-Hastings MPP Ernie Parsons, who accompanied Dombrowsky on the plant tour, said eastern Ontario is an essential part of Ontario's economy because communities like Belleville have strong, committed people.

"Partnerships like this one we are announcing today mean that eastern Ontario will have more opportunities for skilled jobs, prosperity and a high quality of life," he said.