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## Nationwide bringing 838 jobs to S.A.

By [David Hendricks](#) - Express-News

Columbus, Ohio-based Nationwide Mutual Insurance Co. will create 838 jobs in San Antonio at a regional corporate campus to be developed in the city's Westover Hills area, Mayor Julián Castro announced Thursday.

The campus will be finished in December 2011; San Antonio's 932 existing Nationwide employees will move in by 2012, totaling more than 1,750 employees in the city. The new jobs will pay an annual average salary of \$44,000. About 500 of the new jobs will be sales positions requiring investment and financial licenses.

Had Nationwide chosen another city — Raleigh, N.C.; Tulsa, Okla.; and Little Rock, Ark., were finalists — San Antonio could have lost the Nationwide jobs already here, economic development leaders said.

The San Antonio campus will be the company's "third headquarters," after the ones that already exist in Columbus and Des Moines, Iowa. The regional campuses all conduct core business operations.

San Antonio's new facility will handle property-and-casualty insurance claims and sales and service operations. Most of Nationwide's current San Antonio employees work at the company's offices at the Centerview Crossing office park along N.W. Loop 410.

According to a memo from the city manager's office, construction of the new campus will begin in late summer 2010 will cost \$90 million. With equipment, the site's total cost is expected to reach \$119.96 million.

About 300,000 square feet of office space will be built in an undetermined number of buildings on 25 acres. The company has not made the exact location public.

"In the last six months, San Antonio has defied the national economic downturn," Castro said, noting that new-job announcements in the period total more than 4,000. The announcements include 1,400 jobs over five years by Minneapolis, Minn.-based Medtronic Inc. and the addition of 850 workers at Toyota Motor Co.'s San Antonio assembly plant.

"San Antonio is a strong, emerging Sunbelt city," he added.

"This is another example of how fortunate we are to be with this economy," County Commissioner Kevin Wolff said. "It doesn't happen without a whole lot of folks coming together." Nationwide did not have a representative at a City Hall press conference Thursday, but John Raybuck, regional vice president of Nationwide in Texas, issued a prepared statement.

"Nationwide would like to express its gratitude to Mayor Castro and (Bexar County Judge Nelson) Wolff," Raybuck said. "As Nationwide grows and strives to provide superior service for our customers, the efforts of these and other state and local leaders, combined with the attractive work force in San Antonio were key factors in our decision to choose San Antonio for expansion of our operations."

City Economic Development Department staff estimated that the new campus will create 1,042 indirect jobs. The staff

further calculated that the annual economic ripple effect will be more than \$344 million once the firm is in full operation.

San Antonio Economic Development Foundation President Mario Hernandez said San Antonio was chosen in part because the company was happy with the workers it already employs here.

Perhaps about 80 Nationwide employees in Dallas and Houston will lose their jobs as Nationwide consolidates Texas operations at its San Antonio campus, Hernandez said.

Gov. Rick Perry said in a release that the state will invest \$2.5 million through the Texas Enterprise Fund as an incentive to Nationwide. City Hall and Bexar County each will provide a \$500,000 cash incentive along with 10-year, 100 percent property tax abatements. The city's 10-year tax abatement is valued at \$3.7 million.

The site also will be nominated for a state enterprise designation, which will allow the company to obtain state sales tax refunds for construction and equipment purchases.

Castro said the company is not ready to start hiring workers. Nationwide will create an online job hotline once it begins hiring, he said, adding that “the lion's share of the hiring will occur here.”

Nationwide is a large, diversified insurance and financial services organization with more than \$135 billion in assets. The company provides a wide range of insurance and financial services.

Westover Hills on the city's far West Side is home to several financial company back offices, including a Wachovia operations center now operated by Wells Fargo Bank, JPMorgan Chase Cardmember Services and the QVC Network.

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