Green City Growers, a for-profit, employee-owned produce company that is part of the nonprofit Evergreen Cooperatives, will break ground next week on a 3.25-acre hydroponic greenhouse. The project, which will cost $17 million and is expected to eventually create about 40 full-time jobs, will be built in an east side neighborhood so wracked by poverty it has been dubbed "The Forgotten Triangle."

The greenhouse, which is being constructed on a scruffy, 10-acre patch of land at Kinsman and Ensign in the city’s Central neighborhood, will grow fresh lettuce and herbs that will then be sold to large University Circle institutions, grocery store chains, and food service companies in Northeast Ohio.

"Cleveland is one of the leaders in the nation in terms of local food initiatives, and this project fits perfectly with where Cleveland is and where it’s going," says Mary Donnell, CEO of Green City Growers Cooperative. "This greenhouse project will allow us to provide local food year-round to residents of Northeast Ohio."

A recent study by the Cleveland-Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition found that while 37 percent of Cleveland residents say it is important that their food is grown locally, only two percent of the food purchased in the region is grown here.

In addition to selling the freshest heads of lettuce and cutting the region’s carbon footprint, Green City Growers aims to employ Cleveland residents -- especially those living in Central.

"We’re creating good jobs and distributing the profits back to worker-owners," says Donnell. "People are looking at Cleveland and Evergreen Coops from all over the country -- they’re calling it 'The Cleveland Model."

Source: Mary Donnell
Writer: Lee Chilcote
evergreen cooperatives prepares to break ground on $17m gree... http://www.freshwatercleveland.com/devnews/greencitygrowers...