First Engery has changed the name of the Cleveland Browns home stadium

By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

Browns owner Jimmy Haslam and FirstEnergy CEO Tony Alexander made the announcement shortly after 2 p.m. on Tuesday.

"FirstEnergy and the Browns share a rich tradition. To better align our brands that can help FirstEnergy grow its customer base, but also highlight it in the national media as one of the region's leading companies," Alexander said. "The partnership is good for FirstEnergy,Clevelandand the Browns. I'm excited to be a part of it."

Haslam said FirstEnergy stepped up to the plate, showing interest in August when the team announced it was seeking naming rights.

"Something like this doesn't happen without a tremendous amount of work," Haslam said.

Emcee for the event Jim Donovan called the property "a precious plot of land, a piece ofClevelandhistory."

Haslam said the team and utility began working on the deal in late summer and finalized it late last year. He's open to what might happen for the stadium. "The best thing we can do is win and

the fans will come."

In a news release, Mayor Frank Jackson said the new name won't change the most important thing: "Clevelandloves the Browns. The decision to sell naming rights is a business decision by the Browns’ owner and he is within his rights to do so. I support his decision."

"Having a stadium naming rights deal in place was extremely important for us as we look toward the future, and it was just as imperative to accomplish this with a strong, regional company such as FirstEnergy," said Browns CEO Joe Banner.

Terms of the naming-rights agreement were not disclosed. The deal is contingent upon approval from Cleveland City Council. Once approved, the stadium will become the 23rd of 31 NFL venues to have entered into a naming rights deal.

FirstEnergy, a diverse energy company headquartered inAkron,Ohio, has been a corporate partner of the Browns since 1999. The partnership has included many elements, highlighted by its presence as a gate partner at the stadium from 2002 through 2006 and a current scoreboard sponsor.

FirstEnergy was formed in 1997 when Ohio Edison merged with Centerior Energy Corporation, the parent company of The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company and Toledo Edison. As a result of two other mergers, FirstEnergy is now one of the largest investor-owned electric utilities in the country.

As part of the naming rights agreement, FirstEnergy becomes the official energy partner of the Cleveland Browns. In addition, the partnership consists of both interior and exterior stadium signage, use of Browns trademarks, event sponsorships, as well as a full complement of media assets, including TV, radio, print and digital. As a component of this deal, a FirstEnergy Stadium web site will be launched in the near future. As active members of theNortheast Ohiocommunity, both entities will also jointly participate in philanthropic endeavors throughout the region.

This landmark announcement was made at an afternoon press conference in the South Club Lounge at the stadium. Browns Owner Jimmy Haslam and Chief Executive Officer Joe Banner were on hand for the Browns to help announce the partnership. FirstEnergy was represented by its President and Chief Executive Officer Tony Alexander.