Chinese Startup To Build Hybrids In Alabama

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) -- A group of Chinese investors plans to construct a large-scale plant to manufacture hybrid automobiles in northern Baldwin County near Mobile.

Gov. Bob Riley and the chairman of Hybrid Kinetic Motors, Yung "Benjamin" Yeung said the company is expected to begin operations in 2013 and will create more than 5,000 jobs.

Riley said he sees the announcement as another step forward for Alabama as the state's automobile manufacturing industry continues to grow.

"Now as America and the world begin making a historic transition to a green economy, we look to make Alabama a leader in the production of next-generation, clean-tech automobiles," Riley said.

Hyundai, Mercedes-Benz and Honda currently have vehicle assembly plants in Alabama.

The plant would be located off Interstate 65 near Bay Minette.

Yeung said the company chose Alabama for the project because of the strength of the state's economy.

He said the company will manufacture environmentally friendly vehicles that will use a hybrid engine. The engine will use natural gas, electricity and gasoline.

The company plans to build 300,000 vehicles per year in the first phase of production in 2012-14, officials said.

Neal Wade, Alabama Development Office director, said negotiations on incentives from the state would not begin until the company raises more money or provides adequate assurance that taxpayer dollars would not be lost if the project falls through.

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