Auto Supplier To Open $23M TN Plant

Lucas L. Johnson II, Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — An automotive supplier will open a new $23 million manufacturing plant and create 400 jobs in the next five years in Perry County, where the unemployment rate in recent years has reached nearly 30 percent, Gov. Bill Haslam announced Tuesday.

The Republican governor and Economic and Community Development Commissioner Bill Hagerty said Michigan-based NYX Inc. is coming to Linden, Tenn. and will produce molded plastics for a wide variety of automotive manufacturers starting next year.

The company also owns Bates, LLC, an existing automotive manufacturing facility in nearby Lobelville, Tenn.

"Companies recognize and appreciate Tennessee's attractive business climate, and this additional investment by NYX is a vote of confidence in our state," Haslam said in a press release. "We appreciate NYX's decision to locate a facility in Linden, and we will continue focusing on our regional economic development strategy to attract quality jobs to rural communities."

Dan Laible, chief financial officer of NYX, said it made sense to locate the company's newest facility in Perry County because of the "positive relationships with our employees, the county, and the state of Tennessee" through its operation in Lobelville.

"We are excited to expand in Tennessee and look forward to becoming a part of the Linden community," Laible said.

Perry County Mayor John Carroll told The Associated Press the jobs are good news for the county and "the whole region."

"We've got a good employer that's going to be expanding here," Carroll said. "It's an opportunity to bring employment back to this region."

Perry County's July unemployment rate was 14.7 percent, according to the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development. It was as high as 29.7 percent in January of 2009.

In May of 2009, then-Gov. Phil Bredesen announced a plan to bring 300 government and private sector jobs to Perry County by using money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and other federal funds.

Carroll said the county has benefited from Bredesen's plan.

"I think that program ... helped stabilize our community and helped us survive until we could get a company to come here," he said.

Officials said NYX, which is expected to start accepting applications in November, has signed a 10-year lease for the 175,000-square-foot building in Linden. The Bates operation in Lobelville will remain intact, with no change to employment numbers.

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