

NC Freightliner Factory To Add 1,100 Jobs

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CLEVELAND, N.C. (AP) — Daimler Trucks North America has announced it will hire 1,100 workers to build long-distance trucks at its NC Freightliner plant as it bulks up after the recession.

The company made the announcement Thursday at the factory in the Rowan County town of Cleveland. It also said it will add 100 jobs to a nearby parts plant in Gastonia as part of the expansion, a sign of the company's steady recovery from the economic downturn.

The Freightliner plant in Cleveland employed about 3,500 workers before the recession led to layoffs that whittled employment to about 650. Financial incentives offered by Rowan County and the town of Cleveland in 2009 kept the remaining jobs as Freightliner started production of military vehicles.

Since then, the plant has seen a steady recovery and now employs about 1,500 workers, said Corey Hill, president of UAW local 3520. Hill and other union officials had also hoped the expansion at the Cleveland facility would mean more jobs at the Gastonia plant.

"Obviously, if it's an announcement that we're going to add jobs, we'll need more parts," Hill said. "It's going to add jobs in the area."

Company officials said Thursday they plan to add a second shift at the Cleveland plant with a goal of increasing production by 85 percent by October.

The Cleveland factory is Freightliner's largest truck manufacturing plant, according to Portland, Ore.-based Daimler Trucks' website.

Daimler also owns a factory in Mount Holly that builds smaller Freightliner delivery trucks and a High Point factory that makes Thomas Built school buses.

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