Bobcat Expanding In Bismarck, Creating 200 Jobs

The Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Bobcat Co. said it plans to expand its operations in Bismarck and to eventually hire about 200 more workers, almost 2½ years after the construction equipment maker closed its manufacturing plant in the North Dakota capital and laid off nearly 500 people.

Bobcat said Tuesday that it will hire more staff at its manufacturing support center in Bismarck and that it plans to build a product development and testing facility on about 35 acres of land it will acquire at the Northern Plains Commerce Center.

The expansion, which spokeswoman Laura Ness Owens said will cost at least $8 million, is expected to be completed by the end of 2014. About 200 jobs will be created, 50 of them at the new innovation center.

"It's great news for Bismarck," Mayor John Warford told The Bismarck Tribune. "It's re-establishing that manufacturing leg in Bismarck. That just makes our economy stronger. It just adds a whole new dynamic, which we lost a few years ago."

When the Bismarck manufacturing plant was shuttered in December 2009, the work was consolidated at Bobcat's plant in Gwinner, in the southeast part of the state.

West Fargo-based Bobcat makes compact construction equipment. It has about 1,000 independent dealers in more than 100 countries. After the Bismarck expansion it will have about 1,900 employees at various locations in North Dakota. The company bills itself as the state's largest manufacturer.

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