Helena Chemical Plant Starts $4M Expansion

The Associated Press

HELENA-WEST HELENA, Ark. (AP) — A chemical company announced Friday it would expand a factory in jobs-starved Helena-West Helena, spending $4 million and hiring 40 more workers.

Enviro Tech Chemical Services Inc., which makes a compound used to prevent disease-causing bacteria on meat and poultry, already has 30 workers. The company also focuses on water treatment.

Gov. Mike Beebe attended the announcement in Phillips County, which had a May unemployment rate of 10.4 percent, about one-third higher than the state unemployment rate of 7.2 percent.

The company drew on state incentives for the expansion.

"The outstanding Arkansas employees have proven to be one of Enviro Tech's most valuable assets, and everyone we have worked with at both the state and local level has made it clear to us that a California business such as Enviro Tech is a welcome partner in the state and local economy," said Enviro Tech President and CEO Mike Harvey."

"We now have before us a new major expansion and building project that will secure Enviro Tech as a long term member of the business community, and we are excited to position ourselves as one of the area's fastest growing and largest employers in the very near future," he said.

The plant produces peroxyacetic acid, which is used in sanitizing meat and poultry to reduce or eliminate disease-causing bacteria, including E. coli and salmonella.

"This proves once again that a Delta workforce can help companies succeed and prosper when they come to Arkansas to the benefit of both the company and the community," Beebe said.

The company will benefit from $620,000 over the coming three years for upgrades to rail, water and sewer facilities at the Helena Port, where Enviro Tech is located. It will also get a tax credit based on new jobs created and receive a rebate of the state sales tax for spending on building materials, taxable machinery and equipment associated with the expansion, according to the Arkansas Economic Development Commission.

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