

## TN Gears Up For Headlight Plant Jobs

The Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Officials in Giles County are hoping a new headlight plant to be built by a subsidiary of Italian automaker Fiat will put a dent in the area's jobless rate.

The \$54 million expansion of the Magneti Marelli plant near Pulaski is expected to create 800 new jobs in the county where the unemployment rate hovers near 9 percent.

The Tennessean reports (<http://tnne.ws/NdGnKL>) the company already makes auto suspension and exhaust systems at the facility. Giles County beat out a site in Alabama to add the production of automotive lighting.

The plant currently employs 200, and is expected to expand to 300 by the end of this year. The rest of the jobs will be added as the plant is reconfigured to make lighting systems.

"We're so thankful to have 800 jobs coming to Giles County," said County Executive Janet Parker Vanzant. "It's good to see some manufacturing finally coming back, and I think this will help take care of our entire 13-county area."

Daniel M. Speer, executive director of the Pulaski-Giles County Economic Development Commission, said the project will require so many new jobs that they will have to be sought out beyond the small county with a population of fewer than 30,000 people.

"We already have four other auto-related manufacturers, along with a Frito-Lay (facility), but this will be a huge boost," Speer said of the new jobs. "Being such a rural community, it's quite rare for us to land something this big."

Pulaski is located about 70 miles south of Nashville, about midway to Huntsville, Ala., along the Interstate 65.

Speer uses a large poster board to illustrate Giles County's proximity to major auto manufacturing facilities nearby, including General Motors in Spring Hill; a Toyota engine plant in Huntsville, and a Mercedes-Benz assembly facility near Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Officials of Magneti Marelli declined to comment on their plans to the Tennessean. The Milan, Italy-based company has operated in Pulaski since buying the former shock-absorber and strut manufacturing facilities of International Steel Solutions in 2009.

The company has 83 production locations worldwide and about 35,000 employees.

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Speer said the decision to expand the Pulaski facility was made by Sergio Marchionne, the chief executive officer of Fiat and its U.S. subsidiary, Chrysler Group LLC.

"He came to visit in October and was quite impressed with the workforce," Speer said. "They had also been considering Mexico, but in the end, the reason they put it here was because of Chrysler. It's their biggest customer."

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