Manufacturing Plant Expanding, Hiring In Idaho

The Associated Press

LEWISTON, Idaho (AP) — A company based in Washington state that makes equipment for the electric power industry has announced it's more than doubling the size of its plant in the northern Idaho city of Lewiston.

The Lewiston Tribune reports (http://bit.ly/Scpzu4) that Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories announced Friday the project that will break ground in November.

The expansion will give the Pullman-based company room for more than 750 employees in Lewiston. The Lewiston facility currently has 150 employees.

"We are extremely excited to begin the expansion of the Lewiston facility ahead of schedule," said Jana Schultheis, property manager for Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories. "Our initial plans were to begin Phase II in 2014, but the demand for SEL products worldwide has bumped up our timeline."

Company spokeswoman Tammy Lewis said new positions will be added on an unspecified time frame.

Officials initially broke ground at the site in February 2011 for a $10 million, 105,800-square-foot building to make high-tech equipment for electrical generation, transmission and distribution.

The expansion will add another 140,000 square feet and be connected to the existing facility, located on 25 acres in the Port of Lewiston's Business and Technology Park.

Port of Lewiston Manager David Doeringsfeld said Schweitzer Engineering's plan fulfills the vision port officials have for the park as it develops.

"This is wonderful news," he said. "SEL has proven to be a great employer, providing family wage jobs. We appreciate their continued investment in the community."

The company has another 1,900 employees at its headquarters in Pullman that work in manufacturing, administration and research and development.

Company officials said they originally sold products to electrical facilities, but has seen the market expand to include other industries that rely on consistent sources of power. Those industries include mines as well as pulp and paper factories.

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