Chrysler Seeks Tax Incentives On Vacant Plant

The Associated Press

TIPTON, Ind. (AP) — Chrysler Group is seeking tax incentives for a sprawling Indiana plant that was the heart of a deal with a German company that the automaker pulled out of in 2008.

Chrysler spokeswoman Jodi Tinson confirmed Tuesday that the automaker has filed for tax abatement on the plant about 35 miles north of Indianapolis, which was originally built as part of a partnership with German auto parts maker Getrag, but she wouldn't release any more details.

She did say in a statement, however, that Kokomo "remains at the center of the company's powertrain offensive."

Tipton County Auditor Greg Townsend told the Kokomo Tribune that he could not make the document publicly available because it contains proprietary information.

"The information will be coming out," Tipton County Commissioner Mike Cline said. "The company will determine when to make the announcement."

County Council President Scott Friend told the Tribune the company is requesting a 10-year tax abatement on real and personal property.

Cline said the commissioners are expected to review the request at a Dec. 17 meeting, and the county council could consider it the following day.

When construction began in 2007 at a cost estimated at $100 million, the nearly 800,000-square-foot building at U.S. 31 and State Road 28 was intended to produce transmissions and expected to employ up to 1,400 people. But Getrag stopped construction of the plant in 2008 and filed for bankruptcy after Chrysler LLC pulled out of a financing options agreement and left the plant without a primary customer.

Colorado-based Abound Solar had planned to employ 800 to 1,000 people making solar panels at the factory until it announced in late June that it was filing for bankruptcy, and the building was put back on the market.

Despite the history of the property, Cline said he isn't wary of Chrysler's involvement.

"Chrysler today is different than what it was in the past," he said.

Kokomo's plants, which shut down in 2009, have added nearly 1,000 jobs since the company's bankruptcy.

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