

Calsonic Kansei To Add 1,200 Jobs At TN Plants

Erik Schelzig, Associated Press

SHELBYVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Auto parts supplier Calsonic Kansei North America announced Tuesday it will add 1,200 jobs at its plants in Tennessee over the next three years.

The Nissan subsidiary said it is investing \$109 million at its facilities in Lewisburg, Shelbyville and Smyrna, and that total employment in the state will reach nearly 3,800 within three years.

"Our business is growing at an unprecedented rate," said Shingo Yamamoto, the company's regional president and CEO.

The Lewisburg plant makes electronics and plastic components for interiors, while the Shelbyville facility makes exhaust units, catalytic converters and manifolds. The Smyrna facility near the Nissan assembly plant places Calsonic products into vehicles.

Gov. Bill Haslam lauded the Calsonic expansion.

"Not only do they work hard to supply another great Tennessee company in Nissan, but there's over 275 Tennessee companies who are suppliers of them," Haslam said. "There's a virtuous circle going on here that we think adds a lot to the whole economy."

The company has been operating in Tennessee since 1983, when Nissan opened its first U.S. plant on the outskirts of Nashville. Calsonic employs about 6,000 people in the United States and Mexico and has annual sales of about \$2.5 billion.

The new jobs will range from positions on the shop floor to engineers, accountants and managers.

"One of the things that excites us is there is a commitment to do more of the engineering locally," Haslam said. "That puts more pressure on us to produce those engineers through our education system."

"So this is a reminder of how critical that is if we want to keep jobs like this here in Tennessee," he said.

State and local incentives will play a part in the expansion, but details are not yet available.

"The incentives are still being negotiated right now," said state Economic and Community Development Commissioner Bill Hagerty. "We have a few things to work out, but they will be finished soon."

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Hagerty noted that Calsonic is the third company to announce more than 1,000 new jobs in Tennessee in the past few weeks.

Financial services firm UBS announced last week it would add 1,000 back-office support jobs at a new regional hub in Nashville over the next five years.

Food and uniform services company Aramark announced in July it would locate a business services center in Nashville, bringing more than 1,000 jobs over the next three years.

"One word comes to mind when I think about what's happening here today," Hagerty said. "And that word is momentum."

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