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Butler County retains growing business

Three businesses approved for tax credits, to add 400 jobs

By Chelsey Levingston

Staff Writer

An expanding local company has picked a new location that stays in Butler County, retaining close to 50 jobs and committing to create 16 more, the company president said.

Moreover, the West Chester Twp. company Honeymoon Paper Products Inc. is working to close a deal to move into Fairfield's former Pella entry door manufacturing plant, 7100 Dixie Hwy., filling the space of a closed business, said Rob Stease, president and co-owner of Honeymoon.

Honeymoon was considering another site in Indiana.

"The incentive certainly helped but there's certainly other factors too. Certainly the location of our present employees," Stease said. "We're still very committed to our people."

Honeymoon since 1996 has been at its current West Chester Twp. location, 6183 Centre Park Drive, Stease said. It is a paper convertor of corrugated and folding carton packaging for mainly food service customers. Its products include pizza boxes, food trays and deli and bakery packaging.

It has outgrown the township facility and was recently awarded a new contract for a packaging product.

Stease said Honeymoon hopes to be moved into the former Pella building by October, and add the 16 jobs over the next three to five years. The Pella building is about 210,000-square-feet, roughly three times the size of the current building.

The total project investment is in the range of \$5 to \$10 million, Stease said.

"We're buying more building than we need right now," he said. "We want to grow into it."

Pella, an Iowa-based company, first announced at the end of 2010 the Fairfield location would close and eliminate 198 jobs. The plant closed this year, said Fairfield Economic Development Manager Greg Kathman.

"When you get bad news about a company leaving, you don't want to hear that, but then the fact that the building was only on the market for a couple of months and found a tenant that quickly is a good sign for Fairfield's industrial market," Kathman said.

Ohio Tax Credit Authority approved Monday three Butler County projects expected to create more than 400 jobs. The largest is a project previously announced— an expansion of Fairfield's Koch Foods at 4100 Port Union Road.

Honeymoon was approved for a 35 percent, five-year Job Creation Tax Credit, according to Gov. John Kasich's office. Koch Foods was approved for a 55 percent, six-year job tax credit.

The third award to county businesses was to Eurofins for a project in West Chester Twp., receiving a 40 percent, five-year tax credit. Eurofins is expected to create 12 jobs, according to the governor's office.

Eurofins, a maker of monitoring equipment, is relocating a site in St. Bernard, Hamilton County, to Butler County, said Barb Wilson, West Chester Township spokeswoman. Eurofins already has about 10 employees.

"Eurofins' relocation to West Chester is positive. They're filling an existing vacancy in the township. They are of a specific targeted industry to the township related to the biomedical field," Wilson said. "To have 22 new jobs in West Chester in such an important targeted field is an important step forward."

All tax credits are subject to final approval by the Ohio Controlling Board.

Ohio Tax Credit Authority approvals

Butler County projects approved Monday:

Eurofins QTA Inc.- Relocation out-of-county to West Chester Township, expected to create 12 full-time positions, generating \$699,000 in additional annual payroll and retaining \$1.1 million in existing payroll. Approved for a 40 percent, five-year Job Creation Tax Credit.

Honeymoon Paper Products Inc.- Relocation from West Chester Twp. to Fairfield into larger facility, expected to create 16 full-time positions, generating \$749,000 in additional annual payroll and retaining \$2.4 million in existing payroll. Approved for a 35 percent, five-year Job Creation Tax Credit.

Koch Foods of Cincinnati LLC- Expansion of current Fairfield site, expected to create 390 full-time positions, generating \$10 million in additional annual payroll and retaining \$20.6 million in existing payroll. Approved for a 55 percent, six-year Job Creation Tax Credit.

SOURCE: Ohio Gov. John Kasich's office

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