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Leaders welcome Turbocor

By Juana Jordan

DEMOCRAT STAFF WRITER

If a groundbreaking confirms that a company is moving to town, then it's official: Danfoss Turbocor Compressors Inc. is moving in.

More than 50 state and local government officials and business leaders welcomed the Montreal-based company Monday during a groundbreaking ceremony in Innovation Park that kicked off the construction of the company's 65,000-square-foot facility. Turbocor plans to be in there by June.

"A groundbreaking is the beginning of jobs and economic development. . . . We are so tickled you are here," said Lt. Gov. Toni Jennings.

A foundation hasn't even been laid and already the company has key executives in place, after hiring a human resources director and a finance director, both of whom are local. There's also a project manager.

Now, says Turbocor president Joseph Orosz, company officials are looking for a few key employees, such as computer assisted designers, electrical technicians and a few machinists and assembly workers who are willing to go to Montreal for training. They'll return by late April.

"Right now, we're concerned about getting our employees," Orosz said.

Turbocor is a privately run, \$2.5 billion company. Its subsidiary, Danfoss Turbocor, makes oil-free compressors using magnetic bearings, a technology Turbocor officials said can reduce energy costs by 30 percent to 40 percent.

"This technology is about as green as you can get it," Orosz said.

The deal, finalized a month ago, almost didn't happen after county officials took back \$1.6 million in incentives.

They called the company's finances - which included a \$8 million loss two years ago - into question.

But city officials decided to give \$6.8 million. Turbocor will get nearly \$7 million in state and local incentives, some of which are contingent on its creating the promised 150 jobs over a five-year period. Its financial statements project it will turn a profit next year.

The Turbocor project is the first major construction in about three years in Innovation Park and the first in more than a decade to bring higher-wage jobs. Three years ago, Florida State University built its A and B buildings, which house the U.S. Geological Survey and Center for Advanced Power Systems.

"We're glad to be here," Orosz said, adding that in the beginning of the deal there was a "lot of trauma."

Orosz said it was Florida and Tallahassee's educated workforce that persuaded the company to relocate here.

"Tallahassee has great intellectual capital and offers a great opportunity to launch a business here."

City officials are optimistic Turbocor will do what it says.

"We're at the cusp of where this company is going to take off," said Mayor John Marks.

The first 50,000 square feet of the new manufacturing facility, about the size of a Publix grocery store, will be finished by the end of May. The remaining 15,000 square feet, primarily office space, will be finished a few months later.

"We're trying to get the equipment moved and up and running," said Jay Bostwick, vice president of sales for contractor Sperry & Associates. "It's a very accelerated schedule."

Indeed. Already the company is in talks with local business Global CNC Solutions to assist Lively Technical Institute with employee training. Global CNC Solutions owner David Denton started the business seven months ago, after leaving Stanadyne Automotive.

Denton, along with other executives, will fly to Montreal this week to learn more about the operation.

SELL YOURSELF

To apply for a job:

Workforce Plus, which handles job placement for Leon, Gadsden and Wakulla counties, is working with Turbocor. Contact Luke Starling at 922-0023, ext. 226, or luke.starling@wfplus.org.

Vendor questions:

Danfoss TurboCor Compressors Inc.
Attn: Eugene D'Iorio, project manager
444 Appleyard Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32304-2895

On the Web: www.turbocor.com
