

Three Kia Suppliers Announce Plans To Locate in Alabama

Gov. Bob Riley announced this month that three Kia suppliers are locating plants in Alabama. The announcements came as Kia broke ground on its new operation in West Point, Ga.

Gov. Riley joined officials in Opelika in announcing that Daewon America is bringing 170 new jobs to the area. The company will produce suspension bars and coils for Kia.

“We’ve made no secret of the fact that we were going to compete hard for Kia suppliers,” Gov. Riley said. “Alabama has an outstanding workforce and a state government and communities that are more than ready to partner with new industries.”

Korea-based Kia supplier KwangSung America Corp., a plastic injection-blow mold provider also announced plans to locate a new operation in Dadeville. The new location will initially employ about 30-40 people. Upon completion of construction, at least 150 people will be employed in the company’s Alabama facility.

In Tallassee, Korean auto supplier Hanil USA will supply brake fuel and power steering tubes to Hyundai in Montgomery and Kia in West Point, Ga. The company, which will be the first to build a plant in the Tallassee Industrial Park South, will bring 120 new jobs to the area.

Construction on the 54,000-square-foot plant will begin later this year and is expected to be completed by August 2007.

In July, Gov. Riley led a delegation of Alabama economic developers, local officials, and business leaders to South Korea to court potential Kia suppliers. The Governor said the Alabamians left South Korea with several commitments that are now coming to fruition and several other agreements to continue negotiations about bringing more Kia suppliers to the state.



Gov. Bob Riley, right, presents the state seal to C.C. Hur, chairman of Daewon, in a ceremony at Opelika City Hall.

Three Alabama Firms Make Forbes List

Three Alabama companies earned places on *Forbes* magazine’s new list of the nation’s “200 Best Small Companies.”

Mobile-based Computer Programs and Systems Inc., which specializes in technology for health care providers, was the top Alabama company, ranking number 62. Birmingham’s Hibbett Sporting Goods ranked at number 77 and Huntsville’s Adtran Inc., which makes equipment for telecommunications companies, came in at number 134.

Forbes compiles the list based on a series of financial benchmarks.

BellAero Expanding Ozark Plant

At a ceremonial groundbreaking in Ozark, Gov. Bob Riley said that Alabama’s aerospace industry is poised for rapid growth. He spoke at the ceremony for BellAero, which is adding 355,000 square feet to its helicopter maintenance and refurbishing facility.

The project is expected to add 300 jobs to the company’s work force. “You’re about to see Alabama become as productive in the aviation sector as we’ve been in the automotive sector,” Gov. Riley said.

A University of Alabama in Huntsville study last year reported that more than 139,000 jobs in Alabama are tied to the aviation and aerospace industries.

The first phase of the project is to build a flight line operation, said company President Mike Prieto. The company refurbished 45 aircraft last year and expects to increase that number to 60 aircraft by the end of the year. In 2007, more than 100 helicopters are expected to be refurbished.

Prieto said the expansion is partially due to an Army contract recently awarded to BellAero to refurbish helicopters returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

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Good Economic Signs for Monroe County

MONROEVILLE -- During two stops in Monroe County this month, Gov. Bob Riley announced new jobs that are coming to the area.

A \$15 million biodiesel refinery will be built in Claiborne. Known as Independence Renewable Energy Corp., the company will utilize new technology to produce up to 40 million gallons of biodiesel annually at the Claiborne refinery. Biodiesel is a renewable fuel that can be made from vegetable oils and animal fats. The new facility will use soybean oil to produce the fuel, and it is expected to use more than 26 million bushels of soybeans per year.

"We're working to make Alabama a national leader in alternative fuels," said Gov. Riley. "Alternative fuels hold the promise of a cleaner environment, a stronger economy, especially for our farmers, and a way to reduce America's dependence on foreign energy sources."

Gov. Riley also joined officials from International Sign and Design at the Monroeville Industrial Park to announce that the company will expand its Alabama operations. The expansion will add 70,000 square feet to the company's existing building and another 130 to 180 jobs over the next 24 months. The company, based in Largo, Fl., manufactures lighted signs and already has 20 employees in Monroeville.

The announcement of the biodiesel refinery is the latest in a series of announcements that have taken place in Alabama recently concerning alternative fuels. Earlier this month, Gov. Riley announced that Alabama is receiving a federal grant to add pumps for E85 ethanol fuel and B20 biodiesel fuel at gas stations along Interstate 65. Gov. Riley has proposed state tax incentives to encourage the commercial



Gov. Bob Riley, right, shakes hands with Eric Sekeres, vice president of International Sign and Design, at an announcement that the company will expand its operations in Huntsville. The company manufactures lighted signs for businesses, such as the one seen in the background.

development and private use of alternative fuels in Alabama.

In North Alabama, an announcement was made in September that a biodiesel fuel facility will be built in Bridgeport. USDA Rural Development awarded a \$500,000 grant to Alabama BioEnergy, LLC., to assist the company in the purchase of the equipment necessary to construct, operate, and maintain a biodiesel production facility.

Design capacity for the plant is 40,000 gallons of fuel per day utilizing virgin soybean oil.

Two Auto Parts Plant Planned for Randolph County

Two new automotive parts plants are planned for Randolph County which will create 135 jobs for the area. Alabama Coating Technology plans to build a 65,000-square-foot molding plant at the Roanoke Industrial Park and a 150,000-square-foot coating plant. The molding plant is expected to begin production by December and the coating plant will start up in July.

Governor To Send Delegation to South Korea

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Gov. Riley also announced that he is sending a delegation of Alabama economic developers back to South Korea in November to follow up on the July meetings with potential Kia suppliers.

"Gov. Riley has an extensive strategy to pursue Kia suppliers," said Alabama Development Office Director Neal Wade. "We're implementing that strategy and the results have already been tremendous." Gov. Riley said Wade will lead the Alabama delegation visit to South Korea.

Last month, Gov. Riley and Enterprise officials also broke ground on an expansion of HS Automotive, an existing supplier to Hyundai that is increasing employment by 500 jobs so that the company can also become a Kia supplier.

Ceremony Celebrates Bass Shop Construction

PRATTVILLE -- Bass Pro Shops pulled out all the stops to announce the arrival of its newest store here with 500 people attending a ceremony that included a live country band and a catfish lunch.

Part museum, art gallery, education,



conservation and entertainment center, the store will include a large aquarium stocked with local game fish and mounted fish and game animals found in the region. The store will also feature an expansive boat showroom featuring boats built by Tracker Marine Group—the world's largest manufacturer of fishing boats.

The efforts to land the outdoor retailer took more than two years. The 120,000-square-foot outdoor store is the signature tenant for the new High Point Town Center, a 150-acre retail, entertainment, hotel, restaurant and residential development. The complex will be located close to The Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail at Capitol Hill.

Honda To Be Sole Producer of 'Pilot'

LINCOLN -- Alabama's Honda manufacturing plant will soon have the distinction of being the automaker's sole production facility for two of its model lines and will resume its full production in the process.

By early 2007, Honda Manufacturing of Alabama's facility in Lincoln will take over production of the Pilot—Honda's large sports utility vehicle model. The facility currently produces Odyssey minivans and the Pilot,

but the Pilot shares production with Honda of Canada Manufacturing. HMA spokesman Ted Pratt said the news is exciting for the Lincoln facility. Lincoln associates are expected to produce about 300,000 vehicles and engines.

The facility announced a \$40 million expansion in August that will add 20 employees and a die cast production facility. The company employs more than 4,500 associates at the Lincoln facility.

Business Briefs

Officials Break Ground on Cullman Plant

CULLMAN -- Local officials gathered here to break ground for the future site of Advance Heat Treat in the Cullman Industrial Park III.

The \$7.5 million, 30,000-square-foot project will bring 30 new jobs to the city. The company specializes in surface treatments for production parts and tools.

Shwinco Industries Expands To Dothan

DOTHAN -- Shwinco Industries has announced that the company will expand its operations in Dothan. The company builds and supplies custom vinyl windows and door products to southeastern market and coastal areas.

At full production, the company will employ about 150 people. The project is expected to start up within the next few months. The company will utilize the services of the Alabama Industrial Development Training program to hire and train potential employees. More information about the company can be found at www.shwinco.com

Austal Plans Major Expansion in Mobile

MOBILE -- Austal USA has announced a multi-million dollar expansion that includes adding a pair of 18,000-square-foot buildings at its site on the Mobile River and finding land on which to build a new facility.

Employment at the Mobile operation is expected to increase by one third. The company currently employs 750 people in the area and the expansion is expected to add another 250 jobs with pay rates of up to \$20 an hour.

The expansion is being driven by an increasing demand for a new class of warships for the U.S. Navy. Austal USA is the shipbuilder for a contracting team led by General Dynamics that is building a prototype ship in Mobile and expects to receive another order by Dec. 31. The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) operates in shallow, or littoral, water and is envisioned as a ship that can perform a number of missions but can be built relatively inexpensively: about \$223 million per ship.

Besides the prototype ship, Austal USA is also building two large, high speed ferries for Hawaii Superferry Inc.

Austal USA opened in 2001 as a partnership between Austal Ltd. of Perth, Australia, and Bender Shipbuilding & Repair Co. in Mobile.