

Industry expansion means 73 jobs for Hickory

From Staff Reports

HICKORY

Hickory is gaining 73 jobs.

Turbotec Products Inc., a supplier of heat exchangers and heat transfer products, will expand its facility in Hickory.

The announcement was made Friday by Gov. Beverly Perdue and Hickory and Catawba County officials.

The company will move its manufacturing operations base from Connecticut to Hickory, adding 73 new jobs and investing \$6.5 million in the next three years.

The project received a \$76,500 grant from the One North Carolina Fund.

Turbotec's current facility in Hickory employs 16 workers.

"Turbotec is excited about the expansion of its manufacturing presence in North Carolina," said Sunil Raina, president of Turbotec.

"We see the availability of a trained manufacturing workforce in Catawba County as a major plus for the company in the coming years. With this move, we will be better able to serve our expanding customer base, especially in the southern United States."

According to the Catawba County Economic Development Corp., Turbotec plans to purchase a 100,000-square-foot facility in Fairgrove Business Park. Refitting the building and installing equipment will require an initial investment of \$3.5 million.

Local officials were pleased with the news.

"We are gradually working our way out of the unemployment malaise due to Free Trade," said Hickory Mayor Rudy Wright. "We are particularly delighted with our good corporate partner Turbotec, which manufactures high-quality products."

"We've been working with Turbotec for over a year as they determined the appropriate location and timing for their expansion in Hickory and Catawba County," said Julie Pruett, director of recruitment for the EDC.

Turbotec "represents the type of industries that we see as an ideal fit for our existing skilled manufacturing workforce," she said.

Kitty Barnes, chairwoman of the Catawba County Commissioners, focused on the local labor pool.

"It is our people that set us apart when competing with other areas for manufacturing projects," she said. "We are excited about this announcement ... and the 73 jobs they will create, paying above the county average wage."

The EDC said the international company will pay an average salary of \$37,403 a year, compared the Catawba County average wage of \$32,500.

"North Carolina continues to build on its manufacturing tradition," Perdue said, "bringing new industry and sustainable jobs for our skilled workforce."

"Our focus on job creating and worker training are prime draws in attracting businesses and investment to our state."

The One North Carolina Fund offers financial assistance, through local government, to attract business projects. Companies receive no money up front and must meet job creation and investment performance standards to qualify for grants.

Local incentives for the Turbotec project will be considered at a later date.

For more on Turbotec and job opportunities, go to www.turbotecproducts.com.