

'Hip, hip, hooray' Cheers greet call center's 250 jobs

By [Larry Clark](#) | Hickory Daily Record

HICKORY

Hickory Mayor Rudy Wright led a rousing cheer as community leaders welcomed a new company.

"Hip, hip hooray," the crowd shouted for Fiserv, a financial services specialist.

Fiserv is rated No. 1 among the largest technology providers to the financial services industry.

The 60,000-square-foot building in the McDonald Crossing business park actually opened for business in February.

Tuesday's ribbon-cutting ceremony was an opportunity to recognize the company's location in Hickory.

Wright said Fiserv is a boon to the economy in Hickory and Catawba County. He praised the cooperative spirit that attracted the company to build in Hickory.

The Catawba County Economic Development Corp., GoldenLEAF Foundation, N.C. Department of Commerce, the Employment Security Commission, Catawba Valley Community College and local government officials were involved in the recruitment effort.

Wright's comments were echoed by County Commission Chairwoman Kitty Barnes.

"We are open to the need to diversify," she said. "We have great cooperation here. If one government can't get it done, we'll all get it done."

Barnes said she learned about Fiserv several years ago.

"It was called a company to watch," she said. "They were right."

Fiserv has more than 16,000 clients worldwide. Total revenue last year was \$4.1 billion, with a net income of \$473 million.

The Hickory location employs 266 people. It expects to have more than 400 employees on board over the next three years.

Since the call center began servicing clients on Feb. 15, the staff has answered more than 175,000 calls.

Call center associates answer inquiries from financial clients and merchants as well as their clients' customers.

Inquiries, the company said, are received by phone, over the Web or by e-mail.

Fiserv also troubleshoots for customers with questions about online bill payments and other issues.

Basically, Fiserv provides the technology, networking and support for Web-based and automated services offered by financial institutions and other businesses.

Teamwork was the theme of the day. Lance Beck, Fiserv site director in Hickory, had high praise for the EDC, CVCC and the ESC.

"We have great business allies here," he said.

Dale Carroll, deputy secretary of commerce, said Fiserv fits the state's effort to bring about "meaningful change in diversifying the economy."

"Jobs and recovery are at the top of the governor's agenda," Carroll said.

Fiserv is known as one of the greenest big companies (Newsweek, 2009) and the top online banking provider (Celent, 2009).

It is a Fortune 500 company and employs 20,000 associates worldwide.

Fiserv is currently hiring. To apply, go to www.fiserv.com/careers.