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Furniture maker to consolidate operations in Hickory

By John Dayberry

Virginia-based Hooker Furniture will transfer the Cherryville operations and corporate offices of its Bradington-Young leather upholstery division to Hickory, consolidating its domestic upholstery finished goods production at the company's Hickory plant.

While the move is expected to create some Catawba County jobs, approximately 90 employees in Cherryville have been offered transfers to the consolidated Hickory facility, and most of them are expected to accept the offer, said Alan Cole, president of Hooker Upholstery.

"We're excited about the move," Cole said.

"We have a great facility in Catawba County, and the depth of furniture skills in the county will be a great asset to us in the future."

The Hickory plant, built in 1990, is nearly 100,000 square feet and currently employs 75 workers.

Employees from Bradington-Young's Cherryville corporate offices will be offered transfers to an approximately 30,000-square-foot office and support facility near the Hickory plant.

Some positions in Cherryville will be eliminated due to redundancy with the Hickory operation, Cole said.

Bradington-Young's leather cutting and sewing operations will remain at its separate, existing cover plant in Cherryville due to the specialized nature of that auxiliary plant for the storing, cutting and sewing of leather. The leather cutting and sewing plant will supply the consolidated Hickory plant.

Bradington-Young plans to implement the consolidation over the next 60 days and expects it to be complete by mid-January 2011.

"Once the consolidation is finalized, we expect the Hickory plant to operate at close to its capacity," Cole said.

"We believe this move will result in a strong, growing and profitable upholstery division that contributes financially to the ongoing success of Hooker Furniture."