

Legacy receives \$20,000 incentive

Written by LaDonna Beeker (o-n-e editor)

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Legacy Furniture Group will more than double its current staff with help from Conover City Council.

City council approved \$20,000 loan Monday at its meeting. The incentive agreement came after Legacy Furniture announced in November its plans to expand and move from its location at 1828 Brian Drive NE in Conover to the former Ameritex Technology facility, 1610 Deborah Herman Road SW in Conover. Legacy Furniture moved to its new location the last week of December.

Nathan Huret, Catawba County Economic Development Corp.'s existing industry coordinator, said Legacy Furniture owners plan to hire 50 people in five years. This will add to its current 35 full-time employees. Todd Norris, one of Legacy Furniture's owners, said the company will hire five employees within the next 14 days.

"(This agreement) will show other businesses we are willing to work with them," said Councilman Joie Fulbright.

The loan given to Legacy Furniture will be provided as an "upfront payment" from Conover, Huret said. The loan gives the company \$400 per person for each employee hired full time and stay employed for a minimum of six months with Legacy Furniture. Conover's incentives will not exceed \$20,000 to the company.

"Legacy will work off (the loan repayment)," Huret said.

The company will pay Conover back at \$400 per person plus interest if Legacy does not hire at least 50 people by the end of the five-year period.

"This is a wonderful opportunity (for Conover)," Huret said. "They are a great local company."

City Manager Donald Duncan Jr. said the \$20,000 will come from the city's existing fund of \$362,000.

Conover Mayor Lee Moritz Jr. said the fund was set aside years ago for a business opportunity such as this one with Legacy Furniture.

"This is a good partnership for the city," Moritz said.

Catawba County Economic Development Corp. will monitor Legacy Furniture to ensure it meets the requirements set forth by the incentive agreement. Moritz said the North Carolina Employment Security Commission will monitor the number of employees maintained at the facility.

Going from a 40,000-square-foot facility to one of 140,000-square-feet, Norris said it wasn't possible with its employees.

"The reason we are where we are is because of our people, and the hard work they put in" Norris said. "Our (employees) are very important to us."

In addition to Norris, his father, Clark, and David Reinhardt own Legacy Furniture. The company has been doing business in Catawba County eight years. Legacy creates furniture to fit the needs of hospitals, specialty clinics and senior living facilities. Its products include exam chairs, tables, barstools, sleepers and waiting room chairs.

In other business

-- City council awarded the contract for drainage, sewer, water and sewer infrastructure at the Broyhill site to J.O. Flowe Grading Co. for \$813,198.07. Conover Public Works Director Jimmy Clark said the town expects to break ground near Feb. 1 and six months to complete this portion of the project. Clark said this company will work on the utilities and roadways for Conover Station at the same time.

-- Conover Police officer Gary Rollins was presented a certificate of appreciation for 34 years of service with the Conover Police Department.

-- Conover received an award for the city's recognition in making it to the advance level of the North Carolina League of Municipalities Green Challenge.

"This is a city-wide effort," Duncan said. "We try to think green and lean. I am proud of our staff for it."

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