

Hickory Springs to open innovation center

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Hickory Springs Manufacturing Co. is carving out space in an existing company building to open a research and development center.

The 30,000-square-foot Corporate Innovation and Testing Center will be used to develop products for the 67-year-old Hickory-based company, says **Brad McNeely**, vice president of new-product development.

"Because today's markets and customer demands change rapidly, we have a constant need to leverage our expertise and respond quickly," he says.

McNeely will work alongside **Mike Simmons**, the company's vice president of new-market development.

The center is expected to be operational by December. Hickory Springs didn't disclose the cost of the move.

The center will contain laboratories to test its products for the home-furnishings, automotive, health-care and telecom markets.

The facility will be located in a building on Debra Herman Road in Hickory that once housed the company's furniture fasteners division. Hickory Springs' headquarters is across town on Second Avenue Northwest.

The company makes springs, foam and other products that are used in the automobile, furniture and other industries.

It is one of North Carolina's largest employers, operating 50 plants in 16 states and China.