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Italian firm brings jobs to Hickory

By Sharon McBrayer

An Italian-based company that makes coatings for gas turbine engine blades is opening a company in Hickory and plans to create 110 new jobs within the next five years.

Turbocoating Corp. USA, a subsidiary of Turbocoating SpA headquartered in Parma, Italy, plans to create 53 jobs and invest \$15 million in the next three years, according to officials. The company will occupy 60,000 square feet at Catawba Industrial Commons, which is the old Corning Cable Systems facility off Tate Boulevard in Hickory.

City and county leaders gathered Friday next door at the North Carolina Center for Engineering Technologies for the announcement.

Julie Pruett, director of recruitment for the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation, explained to those gathered that the company will make coatings to cover gas turbine engine blades that are used by energy companies.

Turbocoating is a company that is able to offer our customers a complete solution," said Nelso Antolotti, president of Turbocoating. "We are able to offer machines that apply coatings by our sister company Artec, or to provide coating, laser drilling and brazing services for their products. We are proud to become part of such an engineering and manufacturing focused community and workforce. We are looking forward to working with the people of Catawba County and Hickory."

Antolotti told the crowd he's happy the company is moving to the region and that it reminds him of his area of Italy.

Turbocoating Corp. will coat the blades that Siemens in Charlotte makes that are used in gas engine turbines, officials explained. A special coating keeps the blades from corroding in the production of energy, say officials.

Catawba County Board of Commissioner Chair Kitty Barnes said she hopes the company moving to the area will lead others in the same industry to choose Catawba County to locate.

"This is an opportunity in Catawba County to recognize that we are a global community," Barnes said. She said she's looking forward to the commissioners taking action to approve economic incentives for the company in May.

Dale Carroll, deputy secretary of the N.C. Department of Commerce, was in Hickory for the announcement and told those gathered that things are looking up all across the state when it comes to new jobs. He said the announcement Friday about Turbocoating was the 10th straight day of job announcements throughout different parts of the state.

The company will receive a \$110,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund. The incentive is performance-based, meaning the company has to create the number of jobs and investment it says it will, according to information from the state. The grants also require and are contingent upon local matches.

Jobs will include production workers, engineering and testing, Pruett said. The company will train workers through

Catawba Valley Community College and from within, she said.

Hickory Mayor Rudy Wright said the jobs the company is creating will change the lives of those who will work for the company.

“Thank you for being here today and thanks for the commitment you’ve made,” Wright said as he presented company officials with a key to the city.

The company is expected to start hiring in May through the North Carolina Employment Security Commission on U.S. 70 in Newton, according to officials.

Interested in a job?:

Turbocoating is expected to start hiring in May through the NC Employment Security Commission. Call 828 466-5535.

For more info:

About Turbocoating, www.turbocoating.com

About United Coatings Group, www.unitedcoatingsgroup.com.

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