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By Jordan-Ashley Baker

[jabaker.one@gmail.com](mailto:jabaker.one@gmail.com) <sup>[1]</sup>

The Catawba County Board of Commissioners approved an incentives package Tuesday for a Claremont manufacturing facility.

Commissioners entered into a joint economic agreement with Germany-based Poppelmann Plastics that gives the company incentives based on 67 percent of the increased tax on the company's Phase II facility, which is a 53,000-square-foot warehouse, for five years. The maximum grant total is \$28,676 a year or \$143,380 total.

The Board of Commissioners approved the Most Favored Business Incentive package in August 2008, but because of complications in negotiations, the incentives package is now being approved.

Nathan Huret, Catawba County Economic Development Corporation existing industry coordinator, said the incentive agreement took "substantially longer than expected due to transatlantic negotiations and management changes several times."

Poppelmann's management was finalized in 2010, and negotiations were renewed. Huret, with the help of county attorney Debra Bechtel, negotiated with Poppelmann officials, and the two parties reached a final agreement.

Poppelmann estimates their Phase II facility will cost from \$5-8 million with occupancy, uplift and equipment. The ad valorem tax receipts on \$8 million equal \$214,000 during a five-year period. Those tax receipts mean Catawba County will net \$70,620 in five years from the Poppelmann Plastics investment.

The agreement, however, between Catawba County and Poppelmann Plastics requires the company maintain all existing jobs at the facility through 2016. No new jobs will be added with the expansion.

The company, through contract stipulations, are required to pay at or above Catawba County's minimum wage on existing jobs, and all employees hired who are younger than age 25 must have at least a high school diploma.

Poppelmann Plastics is a family owned company based in Lohne, Germany.

The company started as a beverage-cap manufacturer in the late 1940s and since grew to manufacture horticultural pots and medical and cosmetic supplies.

"I was surprised at how few people it takes to make a million pots," said Board of Commissioners chairwoman Kitty Barnes. "It's kind of a mind-blowing operation."