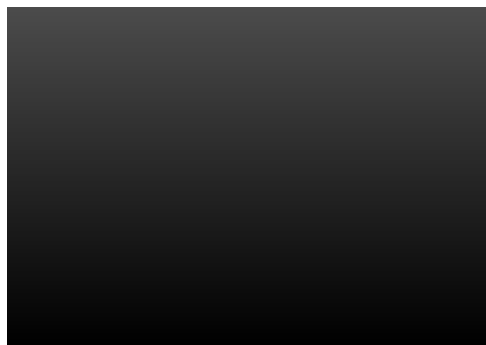


Upholstery Company To Bring 75 Jobs To Conover



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CONOVER, N.C. -- Up to 100 new jobs are coming to a local town and the mayor told Channel 9 the economic impact will go far beyond the people who will be hired.

The parking lot at the old Conover Chair Company is overgrown with weeds. For many residents the building had become an eyesore as Catawba County lost nearly 12,000 jobs in the furniture and textiles industry during the last decade.

But Lee Industries announced Wednesday that it plans to gut the plant that was built in the 1950s, and move its corporate offices there and add 75 manufacturing jobs.

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"It is right in the heart of our city. To have this facility that's abandoned for a number of years and to make it into a show place," said Mayor Lee Moritz Jr. "The investment that Lee Industries is going to make, it's just going to be a wonderful footprint for our city."

Not only is the mayor excited, but so are several businesses in the downtown area from the hardware store to Drums restaurant.

"That is more for us here that we could do more hiring as well," said Drums manager Rebecca Scott.

"I think it can definitely impact downtown Conover and all the businesses," said Penny Corpening from Conover Hardware. "To have a thriving downtown again is wonderful."

Lee Industries will receive grants totaling \$139,000 from the city and Catawba County.

The company plans on doing \$2.5 million of renovations to the old plant and hopes to move in next year.

"It feels good to take an older structure with really good bones and a sound structure and renovate that and create something beautiful and wonderful for the city of Conover," said Bill McKinney of Lee Industries.

The average salary for the new jobs is expected to be around \$41,000 which is nearly \$7,000 more than the average salary in Catawba County.

The company will start some hiring and training during the next few weeks but the bulk of it will come early next year.

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