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Software solutions company could add 150 jobs

By Wendy Weinhold

Anderson County's loss will be its neighbor's gain now that a software solutions company has announced plans to invest \$2.5 million and relocate its Piedmont office to the Pickens County Commerce Park.

KeyMark Inc. said Monday that it would move its 18-employee staff to a 6-acre site at the industrial park, where it plans to lay the groundwork for future growth. The business plans to grow locally to 50 employees within three to five years and up to 150 within 10 to 15 years.

The company's chief executive officer, Jim Wanner, said the move to Pickens is just the beginning.

"With the move, we think we can be the best in the nation," Mr. Wanner said. "We have enough land now that we can continue expanding. Instead of sticking around three to five years, we consider this a place we can stay 15 to 20 years."

KeyMark has operated out of an office on S.C. 153 for the past five years, and the company considered moving to S.C. 81, but Mr. Wanner said his company was looking to be in a high-tech hub, such as the Pickens industrial park.

Since the company's Greenville founders noticed the lack of Southeastern-based software solutions firms eight years ago, the business has grown to 24 employees at offices in South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Indiana and Florida.

The company uses digital imaging to transform documents into computer files, creating electronic filing cabinets for its customers. Local and national customers that do business with KeyMark include Clemson University, the South Carolina Department of Revenue, South Carolina's Blue Cross and Blue Shield Columbia headquarters and Denny's restaurant.

Mr. Wanner said technical jobs including software engineers, developers and project managers, as well as a support staff of marketing, sales and administrative employees will be recruited for the new positions.

Pickens County Economic Development Director Ray Farley said wages would be between \$60,000 to \$110,000 per year for the bulk of technology staff at the new facility. The company will start by building a 10,000 to 12,000-square-foot building in the first phase of development but plans to have a five-building, 50,000-square-foot campus within the next 10 to 20 years.

Under the economic development plan code-named "Project Florida," Mr. Farley said the county agreed to donate to the company the 6-acre site on which it will locate in the park.

"(KeyMark) will help us a lot in really recruiting more of the same type of industries into the park," said Mr. Farley. "It seems the commerce park has the beginnings of containing a very smart cadre of knowledge-based companies."

Monday's announcement boosts the total of new jobs created in the past month at the park to 500. The Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Co. Inc. announced Feb. 20 it would locate in the park and create 350 jobs at a new manufacturing plant.

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