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Safety equipment firm to invest \$4 million in Pickens County

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In an effort to better serve East Coast customers, California-based Allegro Industries Inc. yesterday announced plans to construct a 40,000-square-foot manufacturing facility in Pickens County Commerce Park. The \$4.53 million investment is expected to generate 45 jobs.



The safety products company is expected to be a boon for local suppliers, as Allegro will seek partners specializing in metal, plastics and other materials.

“Sixty percent of our business is east of the Mississippi,” said co-owner Tony Ferroni. “We’ve needed to move for four years.”

Ferroni said the new Pickens County operation will produce Allegro’s complete product mix, including respirators, air monitoring systems, ventilation systems, confined space support equipment, ergonomic products and cooling systems.

Among the industries Allegro serves are the pharmaceutical, industrial cleanup and painting industries, said president Tom Johnston.

“If you’ve ever seen a yellow tube going into a manhole, chances are it’s our product,” he said.

While Ferroni is maintaining his residence in Virginia, Johnston, pictured, is moving from Garden Grove, Calif., to Pickens County. At the press conference he was sporting a Clemson University tie. His daughter will begin classes there in the fall.

According to Ray Farley, executive director of Alliance Pickens, Allegro and Pickens County made first contact about 14 months ago. Justin Winters, a Realtor for resale property transactions at The Cliffs Communities and The Reserve at Lake Keowee, connected Johnston to Farley.

Ferroni said the company looked at locations in Georgia and Virginia before choosing Pickens County. Representatives from the state of Washington also contacted Allegro when word got out of the site selection process.

In April, Pickens County Council approved a tax break on the company's capital investments – taxed at 6% instead of 10.5%. This economic development project was formerly known as the “JS Project.”

According to Ferroni, Allegro received a lot of support from Joe and Linda Bacigalupo, owners of Tri Tech USA Inc., which moved its operations from Vermont to Pickens County in March 2009. The advanced metalworking company, which specializes in commercial grade mobile kitchens and other products for the U.S. military, will be Allegro's closest neighbor in the park.

“It's been our strategy to seek out specialty device manufacturers, which requires a specific level of engineering and highly skilled work force,” Farley said.

With the addition of Allegro, there will be six facilities totaling 580,000 square feet within the industrial park. KeyMark Inc., Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Co. and St. Jude Medical Inc. round out the park's tenants.

More than 1,200 jobs within the park have been announced since 2005, Farley said.

Greer-based Ard, Wood, Holcombe & Slate Inc. is Allegro's architect. A general contractor has not yet been chosen.

The company will break ground on the project this fall and will begin hiring for positions in the first quarter of 2011, which will include assemblers, packagers, technicians and office staff.

“All of us in Pickens County are excited about the prospects of 45 new jobs,” said County Council Chairman Neil Smith. “We appreciate the investment of Allegro Industries and we look forward to their success.”