

THE EASLEY PROGRESS

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August 23, 2006

More than 900 employees work in the Pickens County Commerce Park

The Pickens County Commerce Park located on U.S. Highway 123 near Liberty, between Easley and Clemson, has seen a fair amount of activity since its dedication in the fall of 2003. Three companies have located on the property so far; The Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Company, Key Mark, Inc., and St. Jude Medical, and in so doing, have built approximately 430,000 square feet of new construction.

Reliable now employs 610 employees, which is more than double the original employment commitment the company made in relocating its operations to Pickens County from New York.

Reliable is one of the world's largest fire suppression system and component manufacturing companies, and performs all engineering, research and development and manufacturing for worldwide distribution from the Pickens County Commerce Park. Reliable is also second in the world for the design and manufacturing of fire sprinkler heads.



The Reliable Automatic Sprinkler Company



St. Jude Medical

St. Jude Medical now employs 300 employees, 150 more than when the company first announced it was constructing a world class research and development, administrative and manufacturing facility in the Pickens County Commerce Park. St. Jude Medical is the world's second largest manufacturer of implantable cardiac rhythm management devices. Much of the technology in the capacitors of these medical devices was developed in Pickens County, South Carolina.

Employing 39 people, KeyMark, Inc. is an information technology company specializing in business and software solutions. KeyMark is located at the entrance

of the Park, and has exciting growth plans that will require additional office buildings in the future.

It is interesting to note that approximately 85 percent of the people working for St. Jude Medical in the Pickens County Commerce Park are residents of Pickens County. Furthermore, approximately 75 percent of the Reliable and KeyMark workforces are Pickens County residents. All totaled, more than 725 Pickens County residents currently work in the Pickens County Commerce Park.

From the perspective of employment opportunities, the Pickens County Commerce Park is providing job opportunities for people of a wide variety of skill sets and educational backgrounds. Over the last two and half years, positions requiring education from high school graduate and GED levels to Ph.D. levels have been hired.

One of the goals of the Commerce Park is to help the Pickens County community to diversify its economy. With economy diversification comes additional job opportunities. Many laid off employees from West Point Stevens, Alice Manufacturing, and Ryobi have found jobs in the Pickens County Commerce Park.

Through the location of more than 900 jobs in a relatively small land mass of the Commerce Park, a demand for services has been created. This demand for services has positively affected service providers from local machine shops for outsourced machining, to restaurants for lunches, dinners and catering. Parking places are at a premium in downtown Liberty during lunch and dinner hours, as Commerce Park employees flood the eateries, shops and banks. Food caterers from all over Pickens County cater meals into the Commerce Park as well.

The Pickens County Commerce Park and Pickens County continue to compete for additional economic development projects. Both domestic and international projects, as well as local expansion projects have, or are continuing to evaluate the Park for potential location and investment. Just as importantly, other buildings and sites in Pickens County are receiving consideration by economic development projects.

The Pickens County Commerce Park is a tremendous asset to job retention and creation for Pickens County. The Park's future is bright and should continue to be a new job creator as Pickens County's economic development recruiting continues.