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## St. Jude expanding local manufacturing plant

Medical company expects Liberty addition may lead to doubling of work force

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A new St. Jude Medical facility will soon rise from the ground at the Pickens County Commerce Park.

Construction of the 60,000- to 64,000-square-foot facility should start in July and take about 12 months, said David Ewing, vice president of component manufacturing for St. Jude Medical.



They are going through the competitive bid process and expect to have a decision on the general contractor by the end of the month.

Last week, the company's land-use application got unanimous approval from the Pickens County Planning Commission.

Ewing said that in September economic and government officials announced the expansion that will create 300 jobs over five years, doubling the number of employees at St. Jude in Liberty.

The new site will be built south of the current building and will be used to manufacture hybrid microelectronic circuits, which are components used in implantable pacemakers and defibrillators the company makes.

Currently St. Jude, which has corporate headquarters in St. Paul, Minn., has a 100,000-square-foot facility at the Commerce Park. The new facility will mean more engineering, technician and manufacturing jobs for the area, Ewing said.

That is particularly important with the downturn in the textile industry that has hit the Southeast, said Ray Farley, executive director of Alliance Pickens, which is the economic-development arm of the county.

"It was imperative that the community derive a means by which it can help to stimulate more jobs to hopefully not only replace the textile loss but also grow the economy beyond that," he said.

And the Pickens County Commerce Park has helped do just that.

"In a period of three years and eight months, we've announced almost half a million square feet of new construction and somewhere around 1,300 jobs," Farley said.

He said the county competed for this second St. Jude facility nationally and internationally, including with Puerto Rico, Asia and Ireland.