

Pickens County
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Champion expansion bringing jobs to county

By Michael Campbell

LIBERTY — Champion Aerospace LLC announced Tuesday it will expand its Liberty facility, creating about 45 new jobs for the area.

The expansion is a result of Champion's parent company, TransDigm Group, acquiring a new product line from General Electric subsidiary Unison Industries LLC. The new product line includes the highly engineered SLICK magnetos, harnesses and components.

These products serve the general aviation market and are approved for use on virtually all of the world's most popular general aviation piston aircraft. The products are used on a wide array of aircraft applications which include the entire fixed wing piston aircraft line of Cessna and multiple models of Piper and Diamond aircraft.

Bernt Iversen II, President of Champion Aerospace, stated "This acquisition of SLICK™ products is an excellent fit to Champion's existing Piston Product Line. The combination of SLICK™ magnetos and harnesses with Champion's spark plugs and oil filters into our Liberty, SC plant strengthens our position as a leader in the supply of complete piston ignition systems to the general aviation industry

Champion Aerospace has earned a global reputation for high quality and performance-proven aviation solutions. This is apparent in its Champion-brand turbine engine exciters, leads, and igniters; Champion-brand piston engine spark plugs, filters, and harnesses; as well as in its extensive line of Champion-brand power converters (power supplies).

Agencies involved in making the expansion happen included the South Carolina Department of Commerce, the County of Pickens and Alliance Pickens, a public/private partnership focused on economic development in Pickens County.

"Champion Aerospace is an industry leader in the manufacturing of high-performance aviation components. The aerospace and aviation industries continue to grow in South Carolina and present opportunity. This announcement demonstrates that our skilled workforce and business-friendly climate are working to grow existing businesses and create new jobs in South Carolina. Thanks to the team effort of state and local officials, Pickens County will benefit from this investment," said Joe Taylor, Secretary of Commerce.

"Alliance Pickens is proud to partner with Champion Aerospace, Pickens County Council, and the South Carolina Department of Commerce to create this opportunity for additional jobs in Pickens County. Champion Aerospace has a proud tradition of designing and manufacturing high tech aviation products used around the world. Alliance Pickens pledges our support to help Champion grow

in today's competitive global market," said Ed Parris, chairman of Alliance Pickens.

Alliance Pickens director Ray Farley said, "The expansion at Champion touches a market niche where our community has had much success in the last few years—specialty device manufacturing. The labor force in Pickens County continues to prove that it is capable of providing the skills needed to attract this type manufacturing."

Neil Smith, chairman of Pickens County Council, said, ""It is always a pleasure to welcome a new employer to Pickens County but it is more rewarding to congratulate an existing industry in its success. Great job and thanks for being a part of Pickens County!"