

State to provide incentives for firm to move to MW park

Material handling company currently has operations in both Hillview and Hunters Hollow

By Thomas Barr

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MOUNT WASHINGTON -- A manufacturing company looking to consolidate its operations will remain in Bullitt County.

However, it will apparently move its facilities from Hillview and Hunters Hollow to Mount Washington. Santa Rosa Systems LLC has received preliminary approval from the Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority to open a manufacturing facility in the Mount Washington Business Park.

The negotiated tax incentives through two programs will total \$850,000 if all targets are met.

The investment by the company totals over \$16.15 million. "We are very excited," said Mount Washington mayor Barry Armstrong.

With the purchase of the 23.2 acres, Armstrong said the business park only has a few acres left.

The negotiations have been on-going but Armstrong said there could be no public disclosure until the funding request was made in Frankfort.

Under one funding source, the company will receive \$600,000 in tax incentives over a 15-year period.

At activate the incentives, the company must have 10 new Kentucky employees. Currently, the company reports having 190 full-time Kentucky resident employees and that number must be maintained.

By the first year, 30 new employees must be added with that number reaching 60 by year two.

According to the application filed with the state, the average wage, including benefits, would be \$25 per hour.

From a second area of state funding, the company will be eligible for \$250,000 in tax credits for construction materials and building fixtures.

The company will pay \$1.33 million for the land and another \$12.3 million in the facility's construction.

Santa Rosa will spend another \$2 million on equipment and \$500,000 on other start-up costs.

According to the application, SRS fabricates and assembles equipment dealing with conveyor systems and automated sortation equipment.

The work done at the Terry Boulevard facility in the South Louisville Industrial Park in Hillview is used at its sister operation.

Material Handling Systems is located in the old Ziniz building at the corner of Hillview Boulevard and East Blue Lick Road.

The application states that the current plant capacity must be expanded to handle current and future demand.

It is unknown if any of the facilities will remain in Hillview.

Armstrong said he knew the company had been looking to relocate at one point to Louisville.

"We did not contact us," said Armstrong. "They contacted us."

He knew the relocation would be bad for Hillview but the mayor was pleased that the company is looking to remain in Bullitt County.

For years, Armstrong said he has listened to the discussion about how the I-65 corridor was the best location for businesses.

"I think we have a pretty good location in Mount Washington," said Armstrong.

With Bardstown Road running straight to the Gene Snyder Freeway, he said that is a point of easy access to Interstate 65, Interstate 64 and Interstate 71.

The park's current tenants run clean operations and Armstrong said that is another attractive point.

Having a very progressive city council is also positive, said the mayor, as the members were very respectful to the interest shown by Santa Rosa Systems.

Another key is that a high ranking official with the company was familiar with Mount Washington as his grandfather lived in the community.

"We are very excited to have Santa Rosa coming to our community," said Armstrong.

According to its website, Santa Rosa Systems is the industry leader in material handling and equipment solutions. The company has its own in-house engineering staff to work with the customers.

Besides the manufacturing part of the company, it also has a service team.

Lichtefeld Inc. to be awarded the construction of the Santa Rosa Systems Project.