Aerospace firm to open new Oconee plant

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A company that makes aircraft parts said Thursday it plans to relocate to Oconee County, where it would invest $7 million and generate 75 new jobs over five years.

A.I.D. Co., a subsidiary of RBC Bearings Inc., manufactures control rods used in both fixed-wing and rotary aircraft. It plans to begin operations in Westminster in the first quarter of 2013.

The company currently is located in Clayton in the northeast Georgia mountains.

Michael Hartnett, RBC Bearings' chief executive officer, said South Carolina "has created an excellent business environment and skilled work force that will help us succeed."

The move will take A.I.D. from a manufacturing floor of 35,000 square feet to 63,000 square feet.

According to the S.C. Department of Commerce, the state's manufacturing employers have invested $6.8 billion and created more than 16,000 jobs since January 2011.

That includes more than $1.2 billion in capital investment and 8,000 jobs in the aerospace sector.

Gov. Nikki Haley said the Oconee announcement is "another win for one of our state's rural counties."

Commerce Secretary Bobby Hitt said, "Manufacturing continues to be a strong sector in South Carolina's economy, and the aviation and aerospace industry is an increasingly important part of manufacturing here."

Joel Thrift, chairman of Oconee County Council, said that Thursday's announcement "is a testament to the confidence companies have in Oconee's work force and our pro-business climate."

A.I.D. Co. plans to begin hiring for the new positions in October and will work with readySC on employment screening.

The Coordinating Council for Economic Development approved job development credits, which will be available when hiring targets are met.

For more information about the company, visit www.rbcbearings.com.