Auto startup still eyeing Upstate

Decision on Carbon Motors corporate campus expected this summer

By Rudolph Bell
STAFF WRITER
dbell@greenvillenews.com

Carbon Motors Corp., a startup company that plans to manufacture a car specifically for police use, said Wednesday that it continues to eye Greenville/Spartanburg, as well as sites in Georgia and Indiana, for its proposed corporate campus.

The company, currently based in Atlanta, had earlier listed the sites on its short list as Charlotte; Plymouth, Mich.; Connersville, Ind.; Braselton and Pooler in Georgia; and Greenville/Spartanburg.

Wednesday, however, Carbon Motors said it had narrowed the list to sites in South Carolina, Georgia and Indiana.

The company said it planned to announce the winning location sometime this summer, possibly by the end of July.

Carbon Motors has said it plans to spend more than $350 million developing and producing its high-tech patrol car, the E7.

William Santana Li, chief executive, said in December the campus will include the company's headquarters, research and development, customer center and production center.

Li, a former Ford Motor Co. executive, also said during an appearance at Clemson University's International Center for Automotive Research that Carbon Motors wants to be in a right-to-work state that has a cluster of auto parts companies. South Carolina meets both criteria.

Li also said his company's business model does not include a dealership network or union pensions.

Features of the E7 include an infrared camera for night vision, a built-in radiation detector and a rear passenger compartment that can be hosed down. The car is designed to last 250,000 miles.



STAFF FILE

Trevor Rudderman of Carbon Motors Corp. talks about the features of the Carbon E7, a "purpose-built" automobile for law enforcement, at ICAR last year.