



Upstate



Midlands



Lowcountry

# Upfront

REGIONAL NEWS | DATA

## New supplier named for plug-in vehicle stations

Eaton Corp. will replace AeroVironment Inc. as the agency to supply and support eight public electric vehicle refueling stations in South Carolina. Plug In Carolina, the Charleston-based nonprofit charged with creating the network, said the project was reassigned to Eaton because that company has the ability to meet the immediate needs of the project.

The project, which launched June 15, is funded by two state grants secured through the S.C. Energy Office. The stations will be deployed in Greenville, Spartanburg, Blythewood, Columbia, Charleston, Rock Hill, Union and Myrtle Beach.

"We are thrilled that Eaton was in a position to step up and ensure that this important green transportation initiative stays on track," said James Poch, executive director of Plug In Carolina. "With their help, we look forward to positioning South Carolina as one of the first EV-ready states in the country."

The program will provide publicly accessible electric vehicle charging stations at locations such as municipal parking garages, public streets and retailers.

Founded in 2006, Plug In Carolina is sponsored by S.C. Electric & Gas Co., Duke Energy, Santee Cooper and Lockhart Power.



Photo/BMW Group

## BMW opens new \$750M expansion

BMW Manufacturing Co. officially opened its new 1.2 million-square-foot assembly plant Oct. 13. The expansion is intended to give the German automaker the flexibility to add new models and adjust more readily to volume changes.

"Our past capacity was approximately 150,000 units, and now we are going up to 240,000 units per year," said Josef Kersch, president of BMW Manufacturing in Greer.

Altogether, BMW celebrated the opening of the new assembly hall, which will begin production of the X3, and a 300,000-square-foot expansion of its paint

shop. The \$750 million investment was announced in 2008.

Thus far, the expansion has generated 1,600 jobs, with the expectation that 1,000 BMWs will roll from the assembly line every day, BMW Chairman Norbert Reithofer said.

Since the plant opened in 1994, more than 1.6 million BMW vehicles have been manufactured in Greer. About 70% of all cars produced locally are exported to 130 global markets, said Rick Wade, senior adviser and deputy chief of staff for the secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

**"10.7% feels pretty good, considering."**

**Economist Bruce Yandle, speaking about South Carolina's unemployment rate for October**

*See the full story, page 20.*

## 2010 State Rankings Report: *Business Facilities* magazine

### Economic Growth Potential

1. South Carolina
2. Tennessee
3. Virginia
4. North Carolina
5. Texas

### Wind Energy Manufacturing

1. Iowa
2. South Carolina
3. Utah
4. Arkansas
5. Nevada

### Business Climate

1. Texas
2. Virginia
3. Kansas
4. South Carolina
5. Tennessee

Source: S.C. Commerce Department

