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Economist: Boeing will boost Upstate, too

BY JESSICA SIBLEY
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CLEMSON — With the announcement of a multi-billion dollar company relocating to South Carolina, spirits are high around the state.

Boeing is bringing the production of its 787 aircraft to North Charleston, potentially boosting numerous aspects of the state's shortfalls.

David Woodard, political scientist at Clemson University, said both the economy and the ratings of state politicians stand to improve greatly.

And while the plant won't be located in the heart of the Upstate, our area is slated to benefit as well.

"It is hard to measure the 'ripple-effects' something like this has, but they are significant. I'm sure more students will be coming to Clemson from Charleston as a result of this re-location, and, in the words of Ronald Reagan, 'A rising tide lifts all boats.' We will benefit indirectly," he said.


Woodard

And while the choice to relocate to South Carolina was great news for local residents, Woodard said the choice was an easy one to be made on Boeing's end.

"Boeing left Seattle for labor reasons, like union monopolization. The 'right to work' provisions in South Carolina made this possible. Had we not been a conservative state, opposed to collectivization and unionization, it never would have happened. For that we need to thank previous politicians, like Senator Strom Thurmond and businessmen like Mr. Milliken," he added.

And with research initiatives taking place at area universities, Boeing could very well take advantage of that.

"ICAR was never a part of the original BMW relocation in the Upstate, but it became a reality because the university could partner with a business concern for mutual benefit. I'm sure the same thing will happen with Boeing. The University of Washington had relationships, and I'm sure Clemson will as well," he said.

As far as the immediate impact is concerned, the most visible change is predicted to be the unemployment numbers.

The infusion of 3,500 jobs will greatly improve our 11.6 percent unemployment rate right away, he added, stating that a total of 12,000 jobs could be generated in the end.

And finally, Woodard said, Mark Sanford and other politicians need to be thanked.

"Sanford. He gets part of the benefit," Woodard said. "Had it not been for Commerce Secretary Joe Taylor and his staff, and others in the Sanford administration, this would not have happened. The governor was involved in the negotiations, as was speaker Bobby Harrell and Senator Glenn McConnell, as well as Senator Hugh Leatherman. The package for Boeing was enough for them to come, and Sanford gets part of that credit."

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