

## \$2 million investment



Bryan Jones, vice president of JR Automation Technologies, on Tuesday announces the company's investment in Pickens County. KEN OSBURN/STAFF

# Michigan company selects Pickens site

JR Automation Technologies would create 54 jobs during next 5 years

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**PICKENS —** A Michigan-based company that makes automation equipment announced plans Tuesday to invest more than \$2 million and create 54 jobs over five years in Pickens County.

JR Automation Technologies LLC is opening a design, engineering and equipment manufacturing facility at 1473 Walthalla Highway, Pickens, said Bryan Jones, company vice president.

"It's huge," said Jennifer Willis, Pickens County Council chairwoman. "It is going to support so many of our local suppliers that are already here and help them grow."

Jones said his Holland, Mich.-based company also has a facility in Stevensville, Mich.

"We build the manufacturing equipment

that then our customers use in their business to manufacture parts," Jones said. "Our customers can be anything from automotive to pharmaceutical, food processing. Anyone that manufactures something or processes something is a potential customer of our business."

JR Automation will outsource about 30 percent of its work to local companies, such as metalworking, welding and metal fabrication shops, he said, adding the percentage could be higher for some jobs. The company could also potentially buy supplies and materials locally, he said.

That means the company would create more work for the community, something that excited city and county officials.

"It can do nothing but have a good impact because you're keeping people in the Pickens area, bringing people

probably from outside coming into the Pickens area," Pickens Mayor David Owens said.

Owens said many workers are trained at Tri-County and Greenville technical colleges and then move to Anderson, Greenville or other parts of the country.

"I'm excited to see companies like this come in where we can keep those folks in Pickens," he said.

Jones said the company is moving into an existing 20,000 square-foot building and is considering expanding.

"We're in the process of retooling it to more fit our business," he said.

Jones said positions could include mechanical, electrical and PLC controls engineers, machine build and machine wiring positions, and project managers.

He said the pay scale will range "based on the talent set."

"We already have started hiring, and we're looking right now," Jones said.