

Oconee's 2015 job creation equals last two years combined

USBI expansion gives county \$53.4M in investments this year

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SENECA — Gov. Nikki Haley says a local company's decision to invest \$1 million in building a new facility and creating 31 jobs speaks to the state's "extraordinary workforce and pro-business climate."

That certainly seems to be the case in Oconee County, where Wednesday's official announcement of U.S. Building Innovations Inc.'s expansion by the S.C. Department of Commerce gives the county as many new jobs announced in the first six-plus months of this year

as it had in the past two years combined.

As The Journal reported in Wednesday's edition, county council gave final approval to an incentive package that included 30 percent infrastructure tax credits for 10 years in order to lure the advanced coatings producer away from Pickens County.

"It's exciting to see one of our very own companies find success here and continue to invest in the people of South Carolina," Haley said in a news release.

This marks the fifth

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major economic development announcement of the year for the county — after ITT, BorgWarner, ITECH South and Casto Southeast Realty Services — for a total capital investment of \$53.4 million.

The 426 new jobs announced in the first six-plus months of 2015 are already more than last year and equal to the 2014 (309) and 2013 (117) job announcement numbers combined.

It hasn't been all positive on the economic front in Oconee, as Covidien still plans to close its doors later this year — though that has been pushed back from September to October — and when it does, the county will lose the approximately 100 jobs remaining at that plant.

Founded in Pickens in 2011, USBI began as a wholesale provider of hydrophobic surface coatings. In an effort to meet the growing demands of its customer base, the company expanded its operations to include product development and manufacturing.

Specializing in advanced coatings, USBI serves a vast spectrum of industries, ranging from marine, auto and aviation to electronics, architectural and residential applications.

"USBI is proud to announce the launch of our new facility in Oconee County," company president Erin Roussey said. "We are grateful for the environment to grow and for the support the state of South Carolina and Oconee County provide for business. We look forward to being part of the continuing economic success of the Upstate."

As the future home of USBI's headquarters, the company's new 17,000-square-foot facility, located at 391 Newry Road in Seneca, will also house a research and development lab, warehouse and distribution space and manufacturing operations.

"USBI will be a great addition to

Jobs announced this year

Oconee County's economy," Oconee County Council chairman Wayne McCall said. "I look forward to being one of the first to welcome the

company to our community and ensuring they continue to find a successful business climate here for their operations."

The facility is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2016, with hiring for the new positions anticipated to begin in the fourth quarter of 2015. Those interested in joining the USBI team should contact info@usbiinc.com.

"On behalf of the Oconee economic development team, this is great news for Oconee County and for our growing economy here, as every job counts," Oconee Economic Alliance chairman Glenn Buddin said. "USBI has made a great decision in choosing to locate here in Oconee County."

'USBI will be a great addition to Oconee County's economy.'

Wayne McCall
Oconee County Council
chairman