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State Sen. Thomas Alexander of Walhalla, Seneca Mayor Dan Alexander and Oconee County councilman Paul Cain joined TDC officials and employees in a ribbon cutting to mark the grand opening of the cutting-tool manufacturer's \$8.2 million expansion Friday in Seneca.

Manufacturing giant officially opens Seneca hub

BY CARLOS GALARZA-VEVE
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — The founder of a bustling, global manufacturer of precision cutting tools received a standing ovation from an audience that included an array of local and state elected officials, school and college administrators, customer-distributors and, most importantly in the eyes of TDC Cutting Tools Inc. president Jeff Chee, a big gathering of retired and current employees.

Chee invoked the phrase once reserved for the British Empire to describe the magnitude and reach of his company as he observed the official opening Friday of his overseas headquarters at the sprawling campus off Clemson Boulevard and Davis Creek Road across from the Food Lion grocery store.

"Now, we have more than 4,000 TDC employees," Chee said. "They are making cutting tools worldwide, and all of them enjoying life, enjoying the work in the TDC family. I'm proud of them."

The 52-year-old Chinese magnate shares the philosophy of former General Electric chief executive Jack Welch in the belief that if you motivate people they too will share in the growth and prosperity of the company.

"We have TDC employees working in South America, North America, South Africa, Europe and China," Chee said. "For TDC employees, the sun never sets."

TDC's success story in Oconee County began when Chee bought Greenfield Industries from Kennametal Inc. in 2009 as the Great Recession mushroomed in America. Soon thereafter, he bought a home on



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Jeff Chee, the 52-year-old founder of TDC Cutting Tools Inc., talks about the company's global growth as he helped mark the \$8.2 million expansion of the manufacturing facility in Seneca. Chee designated the Seneca facility as the overseas headquarters for his company.

Lake Keowee, where he spends at least a week each month.

Upon hearing that Chee's wife enjoys calling the local area home, Seneca Mayor Dan Alex-

ander decided to present Chee on Friday with a plaque bearing a symbolic key to the city.

SEE BUSINESS, PAGE A5

BUSINESS: TDC officially opens overseas headquarters in Seneca

FROM PAGE A1

Alexander, Oconee County Council vice chairman Paul Cain and state Sen. Thomas Alexander spoke during the ceremony to express their appreciation for the company's decision to make this its overseas hub of operations, invest more than \$8 million on capital improvement and add 40 new jobs to the approximately 350 employees already working here.

Alexander acknowledged the importance of partnerships at the local, county and state level to help facilitate TDC's decision to expand in Oconee, but he also ventured that the deal would not have been possible without a workforce dedicated to providing quality products.

"I thank you for your work ethic, your work and commitment to quality products that makes all of us here in Oconee County extremely proud," Alexander said addressing the employees gathered. "I know that because of your efforts and those that will come after us, the future is bright for our community."

Gov. Nikki Haley sent a video message marking the official opening.

"We can celebrate Greenfield Industries TDC headquarters in Seneca,"

the governor said. "What a great day this is to have such a good quality company that not only cares about the product and quality they give to their customers, but truly cares about the employees that do the work. We could not be more excited to have you on our state."

The new facilities at the

TDC compound include a 32,000 square-foot office building and a new 10,000 square-foot recycling center added to the existing 168,000 square-foot complex. The group manufactures and sells drills, taps, end mills and other cutting tools.

Chee built his empire by leveraging \$500 he got

in severance pay from an American company in China to start TDC, which today has holdings estimated at more than \$1 billion.

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