

# Quality control firm to locate here

Company providing services to automakers to add 250 nationwide

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A German company that provides quality services to automakers and their suppliers has picked Greenville as the base for what it expects to be a 250-employee network serving the industry in North America.

Redi-Group gmbh, based in Langenfeld, Germany, employs about 1,500 people worldwide and expects to have 250 employees in North America within five years, said Grit Buhling, business director in the company's new Greenville office.

Almost all of the 250 employees will work at customer sites, and the company will likely have just five or six employees in Greenville, Buhling said.

Right now, it has four employees in its office in the East Park office complex off Pelham Road, and six others in the field, she said.

Buhling said Redi-Group picked Greenville for its North American beachhead in part because the company does business with the BMW plant in Greer and because Greenville "has a wonderful downtown, and it's very international."

Another reason is because of the base of automotive suppliers in the Greenville area, said Mike Schwarz, technical direc-

tor for Redi-Group North America LLC.

Redi-Group also does business with the Mercedes plant in Vance, Ala., and expects to do work for the Volkswagen factory planned in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Schwarz said demand for the company's services has grown as automakers and their suppliers downsize in a difficult business environment. Business is also growing because of Redi-Group's reputation for quality, he said.

In Europe, Redi-Group counts Porsche, Audi and Kia among its customers.

The company's services include audits, measurements, inspections, sorting, trouble-shooting, engineering, management, testing and continuous improvement.

Technicians, auditors and engineers are among the jobs Redi-Group will be creating in North America, Buhling said.

Kara Borie, spokeswoman for the state Commerce Department, said the department's Munich office was involved in recruiting the company.

Tony Smith, project manager with the Greenville Area Development Corp., said Redi-Group's decision "reinforces that Greenville continues to be an ideal location for companies involved in the automotive industry."