Tiremaker gives state new boost

Bridgestone's $1.2 billion Aiken investment will create 850 jobs

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Bridgestone plans to invest $1.2 billion in Aiken County, creating more than 850 jobs and propelling the state's economy forward at a time unemployment remains a key challenge.

The news Wednesday was viewed by elected officials and business leaders as an economic shot in the arm that rivals, or even surpasses, the projects of BMW, whose only North American manufacturing facility is in the Upstate, and Boeing, which built an airplane assembly plant in North Charleston.

BMW's payroll numbered 1,900 with an initial capital investment of $444 million when it began operations in Greer in 1994. Today, BMW has 7,000 company and contract workers in Greer. Boeing South Carolina fabricates, assembles and installs systems for rear fuselage sections of the 787 Dreamliner and joins and integrates midbody sections from other partners.

Bridgestone Americas Inc., a subsidiary of Bridgestone Corp., said it will build a 1.5 million-square-foot off-road radial tire manufacturing facility on a site in Aiken County. The company also announced an additional 474,000-square-foot expansion of the existing passenger and light truck tire plant in Aiken County.

The announcement of

TOP JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS

The S.C. Dept. of Commerce has made 53 economic development announcements so far this year totaling 9,528 jobs. The top ones so far:



Source: S.C. Dept. of Commerce

SUZIE RIDDLE/STAFF