US Engine Valve to expand in Oconee

Company to invest $18 million, add 10 jobs over five years

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WESTMINSTER — Local and state officials announced Monday that US Engine Valve expects to invest $18 million and add 10 new jobs at the Westminster plant over the next 10 years.

The Journal announced the US Engine Valve project last month when Oconee County Council approved a fee-in-lieu-of-tax (FILOT) agreement with the company under the code name Gold Dust.

Council is expected to approve tonight a second reading of Ordinance 2010-23 that authorizes the execution and delivery of the tax incentive deal with US Engine Valve's parent company, a general partnership between Eaton Corp. and U.S. Nittan.

The South Carolina Department of Commerce and Oconee County officially announced Monday US Engine Valve's expansion plans.

County Council Chairman Reg Dexter called the Westminster-based company "a valued member of the Oconee County industrial family." He said US Engine Valve is a vital member of the business community.

"The County Council is working diligently to encourage this type of growth," Dexter said.

Hank Field, chairman of the Oconee County Economic Development commission, said US Engine Valve's investment "demonstrates the company's confidence in our community and our work force."

US Engine Valve's expansion plans include upgrading the Westminster facility with new equipment.

Company officials said the expansion would allow US Engine Valve to increase its plant's capacity and efficiency, as well as improve product quality.

"This expansion will help us meet growing demand for our automotive valves and better serve our customers," said Robert Griffin, the plant manager at US Engine Valve's Westminster facility.

State Commerce Secretary Joe Taylor said US Engine Valve's expansion is a sign South Carolina's automotive sector continues to present opportunities and can be successful despite a challenging economy.

US Engine Valve has been in Oconee for more than two decades and employs about 325 workers.

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