

'Grow the legacy'

Itron announces \$30M investment, nearly 100 new positions over next 3 years

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR
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WEST UNION — A longtime local employer announced plans Wednesday to invest nearly \$30 million over three years to create 98 new jobs.

Itron is committing \$28.5 million over the period to establish a center of excellence for manufacturing operations in North America at 313 South S.C. Highway 11, it announced in a news release Wednesday. Itron is a global industrial

internet of things (IoT) leader that changes the way utilities and cities



Rajaram

manage energy and water, the release said. "We have a strong presence in this community, and we'd like to grow the legacy," Itron North America operations director and Oconee plant manager Vijay Rajaram

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ITRON: 'We want to capitalize on this growth'

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said. "Itron's Oconee plant has a long history of manufacturing excellence and is known for its commitment to quality. Through past acquisitions, we have been located in the area for more than 50 years. We are proud of our roots here and look forward to expanding our operations."

Rajaram has been at the Oconee plant for a little less than two years and said Oconee workers stick out because "they want to win."

"They want to make everyone successful," he told The Journal.

The company serves communities in more than 100 countries with infrastructure solutions to help customers manage their services. The move will reconfigure Oconee's plant "to include manufacturing for gas and water endpoints, which collect and transmit meter data," the release said.

Rajaram also told The Journal that Itron is "on the growth trajectory."



SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Itron plans to commit \$28.5 million over the next three years to create almost 100 new jobs at its West Union plant, which will become the company's center for excellence for manufacturing operations in North America.

"We want to capitalize on this growth," he said. "This is great for the business community, and we want to be the employer of choice."

Anyone interested in the expansion can visit itron.com/na/company/who-we-are/careers.

"We will take them yesterday," Rajaram joked of the company looking to hire new people.

OTHER COMMENTS

Oconee Economic Alliance president and chief executive officer Jamie Gilbert said the announcement was "another top shelf for business moment in Oconee."

"As one of the county's longest-operating manufacturers, we are thrilled that Itron is making a commitment to significantly expand their Oconee

operations and we appreciate the new investment and excellent job opportunities it will generate," he said. "It speaks volumes about Oconee County's outstanding business climate and workforce, which are capable of supporting a variety of advanced manufacturers."

Oconee County Council approved a 6 percent assessment ratio and a special source revenue credit of seven years on negotiated fee-in-lieu-of-tax payments on Tuesday night.

South Carolina Senate President Thomas Alexander said Itron has been a "fixture" in Oconee since 1962.

"Their longevity is a testament to Itron and to the dedicated employee workforce in our area," he said. "It has been amazing to see the transformation in the utility meters which this company manufactures. We look forward to being part of Itron's next generation of electric and gas meters."