Orangeburg cited as ‘optimal location’ for Inbra Chemical Co.

Brazilian-based Inbra Chemical Co. officially announced in April it will open its first manufacturing facility in the United States in Orangeburg. Inbra President Paulo Heininger described the company’s entry into the U.S. as a major step, saying Orangeburg is “an optimal location.”

“We are certain that the logistical and cost advantages of this project will enable us to improve our presence in the global market and, most important, benefit our current and future customers,” Heininger said. “It is very clear to us now that South Carolina is a pro-business state, and we look forward to continuing our excellent cooperation with the state and Orangeburg County officials as we continue to grow our business,” he said.

Inbra agreed to invest a minimum of $7.7 million and produce 14 jobs in Orangeburg over the next five years. The investment could reach $10 million, and as many as 20 jobs could be created.

Inbra purchased 21.51 acres from The Oaks at Highway 21 and Gulbransen Road. Court documents indicate the cost of the property was $258,000. Operations are expected to begin in the first quarter of 2016.

“We look forward to the job creation and economic growth that this company will provide to Orangeburg County and its citizens,” Orangeburg County Council Chairman Johnnie Wright Sr. said in a prepared statement.

“It is a real pleasure to welcome Inbra to Orangeburg County, the place where success is made,” Orangeburg County Development Commission Chairman Kenneth Middleton said. “We always say, ‘Teamwork makes the dream work.’”

Inbra was founded in October 1939 in Brazil. It made its name in the production of liquid and solid stabilizers using extracts from soybean oil and foaming agents.

The Orangeburg facility will specialize primarily in plasticizer production with a focus on the polyvinyl chloride market. Of the 14 jobs Inbra will create, 10 are for skilled laborers, three are for unskilled work and one is for a sales position.

The company received a fee-in-lieu of taxes incentive. The incentive allows companies to pay a fee instead of property taxes based on a 6 percent assessment ratio rather than the standard 10.5 percent. Also, the Coordinating Council for Economic Development approved a $75,000 rural infrastructure fund grant to Orangeburg County to assist the company with the costs of real property improvements related to the project.

Plant modifications are underway at GKN Aerospace’s second Orangeburg County facility as the company prepares for the manufacture of inlet lip skins for the Boeing 737 MAX and 777X. GKN is raising the roof of its second plant in the Orangeburg County/City Industrial Park to about 56 feet and digging pits about 20 feet deep.

A lip skin is a part of the pod-like structure that houses the aircraft’s engine. Lip skins aim to provide the aircraft with better engine fuel economy and reduce engine noise to meet increasingly stringent airport noise regulations.

“We are excited about the opportunity for GKN to have a second facility,” Orangeburg County Development Commission Executive Director Greg Robinson said.

“A variance was granted for the building to go to this site and we are excited to have inlet lip skins manufactured in Orangeburg for Boeing,” he said.

The process at the Orangeburg County plant will be vertically integrated, allowing for incoming material receipt, spin forming, machining, heat treating, chemical processing and all inspection, certification and shipping.

As part of the manufacture of the lip skin, the product has to be heated to about 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit and then cooled in a bath for a short period of time. The company announced in June that it would invest more than $20 million in a new manufacturing facility adjacent to its existing plant at the intersection of U.S. Highway 301 and Interstate 26.

First-part production from the building is scheduled for late 2016. GKN announced in 2011 it was investing $38 million in its initial plant at the park. This plant, which manufactures HondaJet fuselages, employs about 60

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New Spec Building at John W. Matthews, Jr. Industrial Park

GKN prepares plant for Boeing work

GKN is raising the roof of its second plant in the Orangeburg County/City Industrial Park to about 56 feet and digging pits about 20 feet deep for the manufacture of inlet lip skins for the Boeing 737 MAX and 777X.
I-95/U.S. 301 interchange near ready

Companies are starting to take a closer look at Orangeburg County because of improvements at the Interstate 95 and U.S. Highway 301 interchange, officials say.

“We are already picking up interest,” Orangeburg County Engineer John McLauchlin said in April. An unidentified tire manufacturer had met with the county about the site, he said.

McLauchlin and others updated Orangeburg County Council on projects during an April meeting.

The $41 million interchange improvement project was about 42 percent complete. It was scheduled for completion in the first months of 2016. However, the project was delayed due to the historic flooding in October.

McLauchlin said there has been some interest in building a truck stop, similar to the Love’s stop, near the interchange. Currently, sewer lines stop at Bass Drive and would need to be extended to Bonner Avenue.

The new interchange is expected to benefit the Jaffa Magna Park, which is a planned logistics, manufacturing and distribution park in Summerville.

Okonite expanding for future growth

A manufacturer of electric power cables is expanding its Orangeburg operations in an effort to meet customer demand.

The Okonite Company will invest $19.5 million and create at least 12 new jobs as part of the expansion. The investment was originally reported at $15 million.

“This expansion will give The Okonite Company additional capacity to allow for future business conditions,” Orangeburg Plant Manager Tom Sanchez said in a Tuesday press release.

“It will also posture us for future growth in both engineering and manufacturing at our Orangeburg County facilities,” he said.

Along with adding one new insulating line and two new rewinding lines, the company will be expanding its rewinding building by 12,600 square feet and its manufacturing building by 49,000 square feet.

The project is expected to be complete in October 2016. The result will be increased capacity and higher efficiencies, the company said.

The company, which employs about 220, is situated on 122 acres at 2276 Rawsville Road.

At its Orangeburg plant, the company makes power cables that range from 300 volts to 345 kilovolts that include instrumentation, power and control, medium voltage and high voltage cables.

The cables are manufactured with a variety of insulation and jacketing materials including, EP, Okoguard and LPR, laminated paper and other thermosetting and thermoplastic compounds.

Okonite located in Orangeburg in 1993 and has grown to over 650,000 square feet at the Orangeburg County Industrial Park.

The Okonite Company was formerly known as the Bimbo Bakeries USA adding 30 jobs with $9.3M investment

Bimbo Bakeries USA officially announced in June it was expanding its manufacturing operations in Orangeburg.

The expansion was expected to create 30 new jobs within the next five years.

It’s creating in Orangeburg County,“ Bimbo Bakeries USA Orangeburg Plant Manager, said.

Aside from its geographic advantage as a logistics center, Orangeburg has nurtured a business-friendly environment and a strong workforce that we hope will enable us to continue to grow in South Carolina,” he said.

The expansion at Bimbo’s facility, located at 272 Broughton St., includes installation of new equipment. The project was completed by the second quarter of 2015.

Okonite also has manufacturing plants in New Jersey and Rhode Island.

Okonite certified ‘Work Ready’

Orangeburg and Calhoun counties were certified by South Carolina as Work Ready in October. However, the project was delayed due to the historic flooding in October.

This proves we are work ready and trying to enhance our skill levels,”橙burg Mayor Charles Robinson said.

The Orangeburg County expansion is one of three the company is undertaking. The other expansions are occurring at its California and Kentucky plants. Okonite also has manufacturing plants in New Jersey and Rhode Island.

LEGENDS OF LOCAL BUSINESS:

Cox, Tourville, Nance, Wannamaker are inaugural inductees for hall of fame

On Dec. 17, 2015, Cox Industries founder William B. Cox Sr., Zeus Industries founder Frank P. Tourville Sr., the late South Carolina State University President Dr. M. Maco Nance Jr. and Wannamaker Chemical Co. founder Dr. T. Elliott Wannamaker joined local communities to thank businesses for their vital contributions to South Carolina’s economic development.

The criteria for selection into the Orangeburg County Economic Development Partnership’s hall of fame includes the significance of the impact made by a business leader, the concern demonstrated for improving the Orangeburg community and the display of ethics in all business dealings.

These four inaugural inductees are men who have successfully contributed to Orangeburg County’s economic development and community enrichment. All have made their mark on the county through their business leadership and concern for bettering the Orangeburg County Business Hall of Fame.

The Orangeburg County Business Hall of Fame is an honor to recognize the individuals that have contributed to the Orangeburg County community.

Each year the Department of Commerce joins local communities to thank businesses for their vital contributions to South Carolina’s economy. The ambassadors are selected for their vital contributions to South Carolina’s economic development.

The Orangeburg County Economic Development Partnership’s hall of fame was created in 2013 by the state’s economic development office to recognize those that have contributed to Orangeburg County’s economy.

The Orangeburg County Economic Development Partnership is a public/private partnership focused on assisting the Orangeburg County Development Commission in development.