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Energizer to add 21 jobs in Ormond Beach

Ormond Beach plant expanding U.S. 1 manufacturing production

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ORMOND BEACH — Energizer Holdings plans to invest \$9 million to expand its manufacturing production capabilities and make other improvements to its Playtex Manufacturing plant on U.S. 1.

The company agreed to proceed with its project, which will create at least 21 jobs over the next three years, after the Ormond Beach City Commission on Wednesday evening unanimously approved the city's \$121,308 portion of an economic incentive package that includes \$63,000 in corporate tax refunds from the state.

Energizer has owned the former Hawaiian Tropic plant at 1190 N. U.S. 1 since its acquisition of Playtex Products Inc. in early 2008.

Playtex bought Ormond Beach-based Hawaiian Tropic in May 2007 from Ron Rice, the sun care product company's founder.

The 12.3-acre plant, which employs 199 workers, produces a number of Energizer personal care products including Hawaiian Tropic and Banana Boat sun care lotions as well as Edge shaving gel.

The new manufacturing production line will be installed in a 31,300-square-foot building in the back of the nine-building complex that had been used as a warehouse, according to Joe Mannarino, the city's economic development coordinator.

Expanding the plant's manufacturing capabilities will allow it to produce aerosol products currently made by outside contract manufacturers, he said.

"It'll be for products not currently manufactured there," he said,

Mannarino said the company has indicated its plan to proceed with the project once the City Commission approved its economic incentives, which consist of \$66,000 in property tax reimbursements over five years and \$55,000 in performance-based direct grants for job creation and capital investment, which require the company to fulfill its pledge to create at least 21 jobs over the next three years and make at least \$6.5 million in capital improvements.

The state's incentives are corporate tax refunds over three years that the company would only receive if it fulfills its pledged hiring goals over that period, Mannarino said.

The conditions for receiving those job-creation incentives also require the company to pay an annual average wage of at least \$39,000 per each of those new hires, he said.



News-Journal/DAVID TUCKER

Energizer Holdings plans to install a new manufacturing line and add 21 new jobs at its Energizer Personal Care/Playtex Manufacturing plant in Ormond Beach.

Mischelle Romesberg, Playtex operations technology leader, spoke before the City Commission Wednesday following its vote to thank officials for their support, Mannarino said.

“She said Ormond Beach was in competition with Energizer manufacturing facilities in Connecticut, Delaware and Ohio for the aerosol product manufacturing line,” he said.

Romesberg also told City Commission members that Ormond Beach was chosen for the new production line “because of the economic development incentives as well as the good working relationship that has developed with the city since 2008,” Mannarino said. “She also said hopefully this will lead to another phase of development at this facility.”

Carlos Texidor, director of suncare operations at Energizer Personal Care, wrote in an email that expanding the manufacturing capabilities at the Ormond Beach plant “will allow us to optimize our operations and continue to produce competitively priced quality products. We expect to begin hiring additional staff as early as the spring of 2015.”

The additional manufacturing production line will be for “a variety of our sun care spray products for our Banana Boat and Hawaiian Tropic brands,” he wrote.

The Ormond Beach plant is the headquarters for Energizer’s Playtex Manufacturing division.

Mannarino said he has been working with Romesberg on the project for nearly two years.

He described Energizer’s plans to add jobs at its Ormond Beach plant a “big win” that adds to the \$25 million in capital improvements the company has made in the Ormond Beach plant since 2009.

Mannarino said construction of the new manufacturing production line could begin by year’s end, he said.

“It’s fantastic,” said Rick Fraser, executive director of the Ormond Beach Chamber of Commerce, regarding Energizer’s decision to further invest in its Ormond Beach plant. “For visitors coming down U.S. 1, to see a corporate name like Energizer in front of the plant is just terrific.

“Energizer is also increasing its involvement in our Ormond Beach community,” Fraser added. Ron Neal, senior technical services manager for Energizer’s Ormond Beach plant, is set to join the chamber’s board of directors next year.

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