

ENERGIZED

Wayne Grant | News Editor

Playtex to add 21 jobs in Ormond

The city will provide a performance-based incentive package to offset expansion costs.

The Hawaiian Tropic brand of tanning lotions has been linked with Ormond Beach since Ron Rice, a former lifeguard who had studied chemistry, mixed together a batch in a garbage can in 1969 and started bottling and selling it.

He built it into a multimillion dollar empire, and eventually sold it to Playtex Products Inc. in 2007. There have been buyouts and thoughts of leaving, but Rice's invention is still being made at the 1970s-era building, along with Banana Boat sun care, Edge shaving products and other personal care goods, and now there are plans for more growth.

Mischelle Romesburg, plant director, said when Playtex bought the plant, it was uncertain if the company would stay in Ormond Beach. Then, Energizer Holdings Inc. bought the company the following year and has since invested \$25 million in refurbishments and updates at the facility.

At one time, many of the products were made elsewhere, but now are made at the facility.

Now, the company is set to add 21 jobs.

The company has decided to take advantage of the current popularity of aerosol sun protection, and convert a warehouse to manufacturing facility. The city is helping to offset the costs with incentives.

"We could not do this without incentives," Romesburg said. She said the plant was in competition for the product line with sister plants, also owned by Energizer.

The City Commission approved the incentive package unanimously.

"We're pleased to see what Hawaiian Tropic is developing into," said Commissioner Bill Partington. "It's wonderful to have such quality firms, Energizer, Playtex, here in Ormond Beach."

The company currently has 199 employees. Romesburg said the 21 new jobs would have an average salary of \$38,500 plus benefits.

Joe Mannarino, economic devel-

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opment director for the city, said city staff had been working with the company for 18 months on the details of the incentive package.

After the company spends \$6.5 million over two years for renovation of a 31,300-square-foot warehouse into a manufacturing facility, they can apply for a Capital Investment Incentive Payment from the city for \$34,000.

The city is also paying the company \$1,000 per new job for a total of \$21,000.

Of the \$21,000, \$12,600 will be paid to the state as a contribution toward a Quality Target Industry program from the state. The state of Florida will then provide the company with a \$3,000 per job tax refund over the next three years.

Mannarino said the state wants to make sure cities are helping with incentives.

Also, over a five-year period, the company will get reimbursed for city property

tax on the new facility up to \$66,308. The payment could be less, based on the increased value.

Mannarino said this is not considered an incentive payment from the city, because it is tax on new facilities.

"It's based on increased value," he said.

The City Commission unanimously adopted the 2012 Ormond Beach Strategic Economic Development Plan in 2011, which recommends establishing business incentive programs for the expansion and recruitment of businesses to the city.

Mannarino points out that the company will pay the full property tax on the new facility after five years, and will pay additional franchise fees and utility taxes. Spending in the city will increase because of the new jobs and visits to the plant from out of town.

The city uses the Impact DataSource model to evaluate fiscal impact of projects. The city expects a rate of return of about 300% in the first year.