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For Release – June 22, 2009

Contact: Tony Smith, 864.235.2008
TONYSMITH@GREENVILLECOUNTY.ORG

BERLINER SEILFABRIK LAUNCHES IN GREENVILLE

Upstate lands sales and distribution operations of world leader in rope-play equipment

GREENVILLE COUNTY, SC, June 22, 2009 — The Greenville Area Development Corporation and Berliner Seilfabrik have announced the location in Greenville, South Carolina of the organization's new U.S. sales and distribution operations, executives of the German-owned company announced today.

The company manufactures "living playgrounds", intricately designed modular playscapes in a variety of unique designs and shapes, and all made from sturdy, galvanized steel wires covered with external rope strands of Polyamid yarns (carpet yarn). Internationally patented, the Berliner Seilfabrik ropes ensure maximum abrasion-resistance and color fastness for years of hard play. The interior steel wires are compliant to DIN 2078, are galvanized and have a sturdiness of 1770 N/mm.

Located in 48 Brookfield Oaks Suite D, Berliner Seilfabrik will initially staff the sales office with a three-person sales team to cater to the needs of dealers across the United States, and also serve as a distribution point for product arriving through the Port of Charleston, noted David Koehler, president of Berliner Seilfabrik. The company had previously used a U.S.-based distributor for its products, but decided to part company in 2008 and set up its own sales operations domestically.

"We examined numerous markets around the country, including New York, Chicago and Atlanta, before deciding to establish this sales headquarters here in Greenville," said Koehler. "We see a tremendous market opportunity here in the United States for our product line and felt that Greenville's excellent value and quality of life for our team, its East Coast location, Port of Charleston accessibility and interstate access made it an ideal location for our operations."

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The company's roots date back to 1865 when Berliner Seilfabrik's parent company began producing ropes for the elevator industry. Even today, the quality of Berliner ropes has earned world-wide acclaim as among the strongest in the world, and Berliner ropes are found in elevator equipment around the globe. Ropes from the parent company support the Liberty Bridge that spans the Reedy River in downtown Greenville.

The company first entered into the development of net structures as climbing equipment in the early 1970s, and have cemented their global reputation as leaders and innovators in rope-play equipment over three decades. Carefully guarded expertise in the field of rope production and intensive development work adhering to the highest safety standards has resulted in a wide array of play products, offering intriguing and globally-recognized designs for playground landscapes. Today, Berliner Seilfabrik play products are found across Europe, Asia, Australia and North America, with all products precision-manufactured at the company's headquarters in Germany. Among the company's customers is Busch Gardens in Tampa, Florida, whose Jungala climbing tunnels and towers feature a Berliner Seilfabrik custom design. The company became a stand-alone organization when his father led a management buyout from its parent in 1995, Koehler noted.

"Movement and activity is fascinating for children because it is always exciting and fun to jump, turn, swing or see-saw, so we make movement the core of all our play equipment," said Lukas Steinke, chief operating officer for Berliner Seilfabrik. "Our special rope is the main component of all of our equipment and takes on many forms – it can be the rigging of a ship, a predator's trap, mountains, even a knight's castle. The flexibility of our rope engages the child, stimulating valuable play activities like climbing, sliding and swinging, and encouraging development of the child's balance, reactions, strength and coordination. It's fun, it teaches, and it supports cardiovascular activity."

"Establishing this sales and distribution center in Greenville represents the next step in our vision to fully explore North America as a market for our products," Koehler noted. "The strategic expansion into this new space and the opportunity we have to grow our company here is very exciting for us."



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“Berliner Seilfabrik would like to thank the Greenville Area Development Corporation (GADC) and the county of Greenville for their support in helping us make this launch a reality,” added Steinke. “The GADC was particularly helpful in backgrounding us on the community, reviewing facilities, assisting us with visas and introductions to the business community – all of the complexities of the start-up process were made easier, including advising us on resources available to us as we ultimately look to expand our team here.”

"Berliner Seilfabrik's decision to establish operations here in Greenville County is great news," added H.G. "Butch" Kirven, chairman of Greenville County Council. "Our economic development team provided essential help that the company needed to make this possible, and further affirms the many advantages that Greenville County offers growth-minded organizations."

“We’re pleased that the management of Berliner Seilfabrik has chosen to join the many other organizations with German and European ties here in Greenville County,” said Mike Buiter, Chairman of the Greenville Area Development Corporation Board. “As an international leader in their field with innovative processes, a global customer base and a successful track record, this announcement is another positive note for Greenville County’s growing business community.”

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The Greenville Area Development Corporation is a non-profit organization established by Greenville County Council to promote and enhance the economic growth and development of Greenville County. For additional information, visit us on the web at www.GoGADC.com or call (864) 235-2008.