

GADC CELEBRATES LATEST UPSTATE MANUFACTURING ADDITION DURING ANNUAL MEETING **BY JOHN C. STEVENSON**



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Fox Hill Business Park in Fountain Inn recently announced its first tenant, Gissing North America, LLC. Rendering by McMillan | Pazdan | Smith Architecture

The Upstate's economic engine continues to churn away despite the challenges from Covid-19, with the latest proof coming during the Greenville Area Development Corp.'s annual meeting, held June 16.

The announcement was made during the virtual meeting that Fox Hill Business Park now has its first tenant, Gissing North America LLC, a global supplier of acoustic solutions to a laundry list of automotive clients including BMW, Honda and GM.

On the heels of the Gissing announcement, Brian Sudler, principal of New Jersey-based Sudler Cos., the developer behind Fountain Inn's Fox Hill Business Park, announced during the 2021 annual meeting that the company is preparing for construction of a second building at the business park, which comprises approximately 182 acres in Fountain Inn.

Sudler said the planned 300,000-square-foot building has already received "a lot of interest" from businesses.

The announcements come almost exactly one year after Sudler Cos. announced construction on the park's first building, which will be home to Gissing North America.

As Greenville County's first new Class A business park in two decades, Fox Hill has been widely touted as a valuable business recruitment tool for the Upstate.

"We are just elated to have Gissing North America being our first tenant and kicking off the park and really bringing an unbelievable, renowned international company to Fox Hill Business Park," Sudler said in comments during the virtual meeting. "It's just been an unbelievable collaborative effort with Greenville County and Fountain Inn and certainly the GADC and the state of South Carolina to make this happen. I believe it is really representative of the team effort and the pro-business initiatives this area has and we at the Sudler Companies could not be more excited about this first building and our park."

Gissing is expected to invest \$18.7 million in its new facility, which will bring up to 116 new jobs to the Upstate.

Gissing North America LLC is a subsidiary of Wuxi Gissing Auto Parts Co., which was founded in 1993 in China; Gissing North America opened its first U.S. facility in 2016 and is headquartered in Bingham Farms, Michigan.

The Fountain Inn site will be the company's sixth location in the U.S., including another Palmetto State location in Sumter.

The company's products are designed to reduce noise, vibration and harshness within automobiles. The Fountain Inn facility will produce overhead, interior, exterior and cargo management components, according to a company press release announcing the expansion to Fountain Inn.

Claudio Calado, Gissing NA CEO and president, said the Fountain Inn facility will improve Gissing's reach throughout North America.



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Brian Sudler
Principal
Sudler Cos.

“Given the footprint we currently have in North America, we certainly are able to cover and supply our customers phenomenally in the Midwest,” Calado said during the meeting. “We also have a location in Mexico, so we felt that locating in the Southeast United States was very important.”

Calado also talked about the company’s search for a facility in the Southeast, and how Greenville County ultimately met the company’s needs.

“It was a very diligent process we have undertaken,” he said, “and working with the GADC and the state and seeing how dedicated and committed they were, and certainly walking us through the process diligently and expeditiously made it very easy, ultimately, to make the decision to [locate in] South Carolina and ultimately to Greenville County.”

Calado praised the area’s quality of life, saying, “We believe that Greenville will offer a quality of life that’s going to be certainly important for our associates and our team members who will be living and working in Greenville, and certainly for the team members that will be travelling to Greenville as well.”

Full operations at the Gissing NA Fountain Inn facility are expected to begin in 2022.



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Claudio Calado
CEO and president
Gissing NA

In conjunction with the announcement, Willis Meadows, Greenville County Council chairman and a GADC board member, noted the value of landing the Gissing NA deal.

“Gissing North America brings excellent jobs and significant capital investment to Greenville, and is a perfect complement to the Upstate’s booming automotive industry,” Meadows said. “Gissing North America will help Greenville County accelerate economic growth and build on our reputation as a world-class mobility and advanced manufacturing community, and we welcome them.”

At the beginning of the annual meeting, Mark Farris, GADC president and CEO, talked about the GADC’s ongoing 20th anniversary celebration and the economic growth the public-private agency has helped bring to Greenville County over the past two decades.

“Today we are celebrating 20 incredible years of growing Greenville together, with the GADC having been formed by a visionary County Council in 2001,” Farris said. “Now, 20 years and 300 economic development announcements later, our community has benefitted from the addition of 64,000 direct and indirect jobs, \$6 billion in capital investment by those organizations here; and a cumulative 20-year economic impact of more than \$55 billion in Greenville County.”

The meeting also featured congratulatory comments by Gov. Henry McMaster, Lt. Gov. Pamela Evette, U.S. senators Tim Scott and Lindsey Graham, U.S. representatives William Timmons and Jeff Duncan, state Commerce Secretary Bobby Hitt, who is retiring this fall, and others.

BY THE NUMBERS

The Greenville Chamber Community Insights Dashboard identifies Greenville’s existing socioeconomic conditions, anticipates what the future holds, and measures in real time our progress toward our vision of a globally competitive Upstate economy where businesses succeed and people prosper.

EMPLOYER DIVERSITY

Number of People of Color-Owned Businesses (as of 2018)

3,075

Number of Total Businesses
Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC Area

17,803

Number of Total Businesses
South Carolina

Percent of People of Color-Owned Businesses

13.3%

Number of Total Businesses
Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC Area

13.9%

Number of Total Businesses
South Carolina

Number of Good Jobs In Greenville (as of 2018)

321,185

Good Jobs
Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC Area

64.1%

Good Jobs without a bachelor’s degree
Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC Area

**Data from dashboards.mysidewalk.com/greenvillesc*