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Fouts Brothers to expand in Milledgeville - Baldwin County More than \$3 million in investment and 166 jobs coming to existing industry

MILLEDGEVILLE, Georgia - The Development Authority of the City of Milledgeville - Baldwin County (DAMBC) met Monday, Sept. 25 and announced an expansion of Fouts Brothers that will bring new jobs and investment to the community.

The investment in Milledgeville-Baldwin County will see the company, which relocated in Milledgeville in 2019, increase its output of emergency and fleet vehicles to meet customer demand. The end result will add a total of 166 new jobs over the next two years as the company continues to grow. In addition to the new positions, the company will invest more than \$3.4 million on its campus, the site of the former Rheem manufacturing facility which ceased operations in 2009.

As part of the company's expansion in its fire protection division, Fouts Brothers will add 96 employees in 2023 and 70 in 2024.

DAMBC chair Sharon Seymour lauded the company's expansion at Monday's meeting.

"We are certainly glad that Fouts Brothers has chosen our community as home," she said. "We look forward to working with the company as they continue to grow and provide good incomes for hundreds of employees in our area."

Fouts Brothers purchased the site and moved their Georgia operations to Milledgeville - Baldwin County based in-part on the building's location and amenities. Company owner and president Scott Edens said the company, and his family, found what it was looking for in their search.

"We were searching for a building and site that could work for our operations," he said. "We understood that we needed to choose not just a building, but a community. The local leadership and economic development efforts, as well as the community members themselves, have helped make Milledgeville and Baldwin County a home for us."

Since acquiring the site, Fouts Brothers has hired hundreds of workers to custom equip vehicle chassis for first responders and company fleet vehicles. Initially, the company occupied half of the near 700,000 square foot building with intentions to lease 336,000 square feet to other tenants. Exponential growth of the business has led to utilization of much of that excess space as the company builds out and delivers utility vehicles, including fire trucks and other first responder vehicles, to locations across the globe.

DAMBC Executive Director Jonathan Jackson said the project has continued to exceed expectations and has seen multiple side benefits.

"Any time an industry with this size and scope locates in a community, you see ancillary benefits," he said. "While successfully courting potential clients and hosting specialists to perform specific work on vehicles, we are already seeing a big increase in hotel room stays. In addition, dozens of families have moved into the area. The presence of Fouts Brothers is helping DAMBC with our mission of growing this community in a thoughtful way. I could not be more proud of our local industries and DAMBC."

The plans for expansion are ahead of schedule, Edens said. He said the local business climate helped the company feel comfortable enough to launch six new firetruck lines. By January of 2024, Fouts Brothers expects to be able to produce six firetrucks per week in Milledgeville - Baldwin County.