



CEOs, Site Consultants, Prospects

Facilities Locator

Existing SC Business

Sign up for our newsletter

Small Business & Entrepreneurs

About SC Commerce

Newsroom

HOME NEWS ROOM PRESS RELEASES BRIDGESTONE AMERICAS ANNOUNCES NEW FACILITY, EXPANSION IN AIKEN COUNTY

SEP 21 2011

Bridgestone Americas Announces New Facility, Expansion in Aiken County

Largest single initial capital investment in state's history

COLUMBIA, S.C. – September 21, 2011 – During an event today attended by South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, Bridgestone Americas, Inc., a subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation, announced the construction of a new 1.5 million-square-foot off-road radial tire (ORR) manufacturing facility on a greenfield site in Aiken County. Bridgestone Americas also announced an additional 474,000-square-foot expansion of the existing passenger (PSR) and light truck (LTR) tire plant in Aiken County. When fully completed, the total \$1.2 billion investment in these new projects will increase Bridgestone Americas' workforce in Aiken County by more than 850 full-time and contractor positions.

The company previously announced a 266,000-square-foot expansion of this plant in July.

"The announcement of this greenfield off-road radial tire plant is a major strategic investment by the global Bridgestone Group to enhance its supply systems, improve its sourcing flexibility and further strengthen the Bridgestone Group's position as the global leader in the off-road radial tire segment," said Gary Garfield, Vice President and Senior Officer, Bridgestone Corporation, and CEO and President, Bridgestone Americas.

The construction of this new ORR plant is part of the company's global sourcing strategy and will strengthen the ability of the global Bridgestone Group to cement its leadership position in this important market segment.

The new ORR manufacturing facility will be at a greenfield site in the Sage Mill Industrial Park in Aiken County. Previously, large and ultra-large ORR tires had been produced exclusively at Bridgestone Corporation's Shimonoseki and Kitakyushu plants located in Japan. Bridgestone will install ORR production technologies developed in Japan in the new plant to more effectively respond to customer needs and growing global demand and further improvements in its supply systems. The Bridgestone Group will also have more options for future expansions, improving its ability to rapidly respond to changes in the operating environment and customer requirements.

"Today's announcement represents the largest initial capital investment by a company in our state's history, and we celebrate the more than 850 new jobs. This is a continuation of the good work we are doing to partner with companies. South Carolina has a great reason to smile today," said Gov. Nikki Haley.

The plant will be built with a focus on the environment and plans to achieve LEED Construction Certification by incorporating state-of-the-art technology in its facility and equipment design.

"Bridgestone Americas is a world-class manufacturer and this investment will be a real game-changer. The company's new plant will further strengthen South Carolina's manufacturing sector, and shows that our business-friendly environment and top-notch talent continue to keep us competitive with locations across the globe," said Bobby Hitt, Secretary of Commerce.

The capacity expansion at the existing Aiken County PSR/LTR tire plant announced today, along with the earlier expansion announcement in July, is intended to meet growing demand in key market segments, including ultra-high performance and light truck/SUV tires. The addition of new, more advanced tire building machines will provide the plant with an additional level of versatility and will give the plant even greater flexibility and speed in responding to shifts in market demand. Over the long term this versatility and flexibility will help the company address customer needs by improving the fill rates of high-demand tires.

"The Port of Charleston congratulates Bridgestone Americas. The Port is key in providing companies a way to reach world markets, and there is not a better place to do that than from right here in South Carolina," said Jim Newsome, President and CEO of the S.C. State Ports Authority.

"On behalf of the citizens of Aiken County I want to thank Bridgestone Americas for this significant new investment and job creation being announced," said Aiken County Council Chairman Ronnie Young. "The County Council works hard to create an environment where manufacturing companies can locate and be successful. We are grateful for Bridgestone Americas' confidence in our workforce and community. We look forward to working with them as they continue to grow."

"This is a great day for Bridgestone Americas and Aiken County," said Gary Stooksbury, Chairman of the Board of The Economic Development Partnership. "We are very appreciative that Aiken County was chosen for this new investment. This historic announcement reflects on the strong partnership that exists between Aiken County and Bridgestone Americas. The strength of our community lies with our manufacturing base."

In his remarks during the announcement in Aiken County, Garfield expressed his appreciation for the assistance received by the company in connection with the projects. "We've had tremendous support from the leadership in South Carolina including Governor Haley, Secretary of Commerce Hitt, County Council

Subscribe

Media Contact

FEATURED EVENT



Paris Air Show 2011

Monday, June 20, 2011
South Carolina has a deep history in aviation and aerospace. From companies

fitting traditional aluminum-skinned aircraft, to defense companies employing the latest technologies, more than 100 such companies call South Carolina home. We'll be celebrating the future of aviation at the 2011 Paris Air Show, June 20-26th where South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley and our delegates will be on hand to discuss why industry leaders like Boeing, GE, Northrop-Grumman and Lockheed-Martin come to South Carolina.

[View All Events](#)

FEATURED PHOTO



[View Gallery](#)

FEATURED VIDEO



[View Gallery](#)

The South Carolina Department of Commerce provided \$15.5 million in grants to the company for infrastructure and site preparation, including about \$6 million that was provided to improve public roads adjacent to the facility. The Coordinating Council also approved the project for job development credits.

About Bridgestone Corporation:

Bridgestone Corporation, headquartered in Tokyo, is the world's largest tire and rubber company. In addition to tires for use in a wide variety of applications, it also manufactures a broad range of diversified products, which include industrial rubber and chemical products and sporting goods. Its products are sold in over 150 nations and territories around the world.

About Bridgestone Americas Inc.:

Nashville, Tenn.-based Bridgestone America, Inc. (BSAM) is the U.S. subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation, the world's largest tire and rubber company. BSAM and its subsidiaries develop, manufacture and market a wide range of Bridgestone, Firestone and associate brand tires to address the needs of a broad range of customers, including consumers, automotive and commercial vehicle original equipment manufacturers, and those in the agricultural, forestry and mining industries. The companies are also engaged in retreading operations throughout the Western Hemisphere and produce air springs, roofing materials, and industrial fibers and textiles. The BSAM family of companies also operates the world's largest chain of automotive tire and service centers. Guided by its One Team, One Planet message, the company is dedicated to achieving a positive environmental impact in all of the communities it calls home.

About S.C. Department of Commerce

As South Carolina's leading economic development agency, the Department of Commerce works to recruit new businesses and help existing businesses grow. This year, Commerce won the Gold Shovel Award and the Deal of Year Award from Area Development magazine. Commerce has been part of recruiting world-class companies to South Carolina such as Boeing, Monster.com, Heinz, ZF Group, BMW and Google Inc. Commerce also supports small and existing business, rural development initiatives and offers grants for community development. For more information, visit www.SCcommerce.com.

-###-

Timeline and key facts for the new ORR plant construction and start-up:

- Manufacturing equipment for the first phase of the plant will be installed starting in the fourth quarter of 2012.
- The first production tire is scheduled to be produced by the end of the first quarter of 2014 with a target date of full phase one production by the end of 2015.
- The first phase of the project will initially create more than 330 full-time and contractor jobs.
- The project is expected to result in approximately 550 new full-time and contractor jobs when fully completed (planned for 2020).

Timeline and key facts for the PSR/LTR expansion project:

- In July the company announced the first phase of the PSR/LTR plant's expansion, a \$135 million investment designed to increase daily capacity by 4,750 tires.
- The expansion announced today will, when complete, increase the plant's tire production by an additional 8,000 tires per day.
- When fully completed, the two projects will increase the plant's square footage by 740,000 square feet – to 2.74 million square feet – and result in a rated production capacity of 37,750 tires per day or approximately 13.4 million tires annually.
- Construction of both phases of the plant's expansion is planned to begin in November 2011 with an expected completion date in the first quarter of 2013.
- The first production tire is projected to be produced in the expansion areas during the third quarter of 2013.
- The two PSR/LTR projects are expected to create more than 300 new full-time and contractor jobs in Aiken County when fully completed (planned for 2015).