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New machine promises jobs in Kingston

Jim Gordon | May-22-09, 03:32 PM |

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Expansion of a business in a recession may seem counterintuitive, but Armor Dynamics of Kingston said that doubling its size to accommodate a state-of-the-art plastic armor production machine will not only benefit the company and the region, but also the service men and women serving in uniform around the world.

The company's confidence stems from the speed of production for its protective product that will be possible using a new machine now being built in California that will increase the rate of production of pressed plastic composite ballistic panels four feet wide. The new "pultrusion" method will create the panels up to 20 times faster than traditional pressed plastic method, said Robert M. Miraldi, communications director for Armor Dynamics Inc.

While the traditional method creates panels that are pressed into 4-x 8-foot pieces, the new Pultrusion method creates a 4-foot-wide panel that can be any length desired and cut to fit needed sizes. The new method also allows Armor Dynamics to use recycled water bottles as the raw material. Unlike the pressed plastic process, pultrusion does not create any gas pollutants.

The 140-foot-long machine is being manufactured in San Diego and will be disassembled and shipped to the Armor Dynamics building at the Kingston Business Park. The company hopes to break ground this summer on a 19,000-square-foot expansion of its current 15,000 square feet at the site.

Armor Dynamics built its structure last year and became the second tenant of the Kingston Business Park. The park was established in 1996 and has room to accommodate five companies. In October 2007, the Kingston Local Development Corp. and Armor Dynamics signed a lease agreement that paved the way for the construction of the original building. The board of the development corporation, which owns the park, voted to accept a 99-year lease.

The Business Park is in a tax-friendly Empire Zone and Armor Dynamics has incentives to receive the EZ benefits, if it creates jobs. "If they don't create jobs and make investments, they don't get any benefits," said Stephen M. Finkle, economic development director for the city of Kingston. The system confers benefits through tax credits received for meeting job creation criteria. "Its' performance driven," said Finkle.

Currently, seven people work at the plant, a slow start after the high hopes raised by the company's announcement in 2006 at city hall, with then-Gov. George Pataki in attendance. The company planned on 58,000 square feet and hoped to hire upwards of 500 workers to make plastic armor for soldiers in war zones, cops on patrol, aircraft and even trash cans for urban areas where terrorists might strike. "Like all companies we have been affected by the economy," said Miraldi. "Have we grown at the rate we have liked? No. But I don't think that any businesses in this climate have moved at the rate we would like."

The new machine should allow the company to hire 25 new workers almost immediately upon arrival and completion of the expansion. "I think it's important to understand these are good jobs; they are well-paying jobs," said Miraldi. "Starting this summer, we will be looking for help from material engineers to forklift operators, skilled workers doing skilled jobs."

The company's ownership partners, including Stone Ridge residents David Warren and Wayne Schaffer, "really do have a commitment to the local area," Miraldi said, as evidenced by their setting up shop in the Hudson Valley. "I wouldn't say New York is the most appealing place for a manufacturing operation of the size we plan to be."

He said under the terms of the EZ, for every qualified job that is created the company receives a credit of \$1,500 each year for a total of five years. Hiring 10 people in year would potentially mean a \$15,000 credit. The company is also potentially eligible for a 10 percent investment tax credit on manufacturing equipment and facility improvements for manufacturing. Typically, a business is able to take a 5 percent credit. "Bottom line," said Miraldi, "the company and the community will benefit from the job creation and these investment tax credits."



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Driven to the edge

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A furrow full of computer-generated shopping lists

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An online farm market takes up community supported agriculture and expands the idea.



Reining in Ulster's books

May-22-09, 03:56 PM

The new Ulster County comptroller reports county financial software is outdated

Felicia Casey: artist at work

May-20-09, 03:02 PM

Age: 57 Studio: Highland Web site: www.feliciacasey.com

Bank of America closing branches

May-20-09, 02:52 PM

The Bank of America will close two branches in Ulster County and might announce other closings in the Hudson Valley later this year.

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Welcome mat for the computer set

May-20-09, 02:16 PM

Computer geeks are famous for working alone.

BID vote riles city

Close election spawns talk of a lawsuit

May-20-09, 11:36 AM

The Poughkeepsie City Council has tabled a motion to certify the defeat of a proposed Business Improvement District (BID) and awaits recommendations from counsel.

To farm, perchance to prosper at it

Efforts afoot and afield to help

May-20-09, 11:18 AM

About 1 percent of New York City's population now shops at farmer's markets.

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May-18-09, 08:55 AM

Hudson Valley fiber farm reinvents agriculture with cyber farm.



Big power plant planned for small town

May-18-09, 08:41 AM

Advanced Power Services L.L.C. proposes \$1Billion 1,000 mw gas fired power plant for town of Dover.



Kingston brew holds head high

May-18-09, 07:54 AM

Keegan Ales wins state tasting awards



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May-18-09, 07:35 AM

A key street in Poughkeepsie is being turned back to two-way traffic.



Credit is still tight, say successful retailer, manufacturer

May-15-09, 01:40 PM

Some businesses – the ones who don't need it – can get all the money they need

Renovation starts Tech City master plan action

May-14-09, 02:23 PM

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Doc, these times are killing me

The psychological pitfalls of a down economy

May-13-09, 06:07 PM

In tough times, worry and anxiety can spike to levels that are potentially debilitating and even dangerous.

Sun spots

Hopewell Junction joins the solar club

May-13-09, 06:01 PM

With help from taxpayers, a new solar cell company is setting up shop in the Hudson Valley.

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