

Hicksville lands new plant, Loans totaling \$7 million draw manufacturer, 200 jobs

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FORT WAYNE – With loans totaling more than \$7 million, Ohio has lured a Texas-based manufacturer to open a factory in Hicksville.

FWT, which designs and makes custom steel supports for the telecommunications and utility industries, plans to hire 200.

The full-time jobs will pay \$17 an hour.

Christiane Schmenk, director of the Ohio Department of Development, said the department has worked to create a favorable business climate and fast-track economic development.

“Projects like this are the backbone of Ohio’s economic growth,” she said in a written statement.

Fort Worth-based FWT will use a \$3 million 166 Direct Loan and a \$4.04 million Ohio Enterprise Bond Fund loan to buy and renovate a 300,000-square-foot building on 92 acres.

Hicksville, which is 25 miles northeast of Fort Wayne, has a population of about 3,400. Defiance County’s unemployment rate was 8.9 percent in September, according to Ohio data released Oct. 25.

Texas was also in competition for the project, Ohio officials announced.

Mark Kvamme, president and interim chief investment officer for JobsOhio, described the win as something the county and state can build upon.

“Ohio has always been a leader in manufacturing, and the addition of FWT is further evidence that we are going to strengthen that position by attracting cutting-edge companies that show the increasing diversity in the industry,” he said in a written statement.

FWT officials couldn’t be reached for comment.

The company’s products include communications poles that can be disguised as flagpoles, signs, palm trees or pine trees, allowing them to blend with their surroundings.

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