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## **Manufacturer to bring 50 new jobs to county**

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A global manufacturer is expanding its Cherokee County presence with a \$5 million investment and the addition of at least 50 jobs.

Chart Industries Inc., which makes gas production, storage and end-use equipment for the biomedical industry and other fields, is relocating a line to a new facility close to its existing plant north of Canton.

CAIRE, which operates under Chart's Biomedical segment, will close its liquid oxygen therapy manufacturing operations in Plainfield, Ind., and relocate it to the Cherokee Office of Economic Development's Airport Commerce Center.

"Chart's expanded presence in the county will send a strong signal to other companies considering expansion or relocation," county Commission Chairman Buzz Ahrens said. "We look forward to their continued presence and growth in Cherokee County."

The company, which has been in business in Cherokee since 1982, is one of the county's top-five industrial employers with about 270 employees and a 150,000-square-foot plant in the Interstate 575/Airport Industrial Park. Chart in 2008 expanded its operations by relocating its regional administrative office there from Marietta.

"In this economy, positive news such as this is so important," said Misti Martin, president of the office of economic development.

The company, represented by broker Biljack Bell of Wilson, Hull and Neal, this month closed on the purchase of the last remaining lot in the office park off Interstate 575 at exit 24 near the expanding Cherokee County Airport.

The Indiana manufacturing and customer service operations were acquired by Chart in November as part of the purchase of Covidien's liquid oxygen therapy business.

The new 66,482-square-foot facility will be built by the Rooker Company on 16.5 acres. Site clearing is under way, and construction should be completed by April. It will be the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design-certified manufacturing building in the county.

There are plans to hire a minimum of 50 new jobs for skilled workers with \$4 million in annual payroll and a total capital investment of \$5 million. The plant will manufacture metal cylinders.

"We are very excited about our expansion in Cherokee County as we are able to leverage the talent of our local management team in creating a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility," said Steve Shaw, president of Chart BioMedical.

State Rep. Calvin Hill (R-Hickory Flat), who represents the area, said Chart's expansion will ripple through the local economy.

"It brings not only jobs, but houses will be bought," he said. "Hopefully, it will employ some people that are unemployed."

About 130 employees are being affected by the closing of the Indiana plant. Chart officials said they will provide assistance to help those employees in seeking new jobs.

State Senate Majority Leader Chip Rogers (R-Woodstock) said Chart recognized Cherokee as a great destination for investment.

"Our economic team has done an outstanding job bringing jobs to our community even during these tough economic times. I am convinced this is the beginning of a rebirth of job growth in Cherokee, and I look forward to being part of this economic expansion," he said.

Marshall Day, chairman of the board for the office of economic development, said existing industries are important to the county. Cherokee, he added, is ready to meet the needs for business growth.

The company is eligible for the county's existing industry incentive program, which allows the phase-in of property taxes for capital costs, as well as state tax credits tied to job creation.

"The additional jobs created by this expansion reflect successful operations by Chart and bode well for economic development in Cherokee County," he said.

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