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## **Biotech firm moves headquarters to Oakwood**



**Atlanta Biologicals CEO Gerhard Baade and Georgia Lt. Governor Casey Cagle chat at Tanners Creek Business Park Friday morning during a groundbreaking ceremony for Gerhard's Company.**



**Georgia Lt. Governor Casey Cagle, center, gets his hard hat adjusted Friday morning with Atlanta Biologicals CEO Gerhard Baade, right, and President Renate Gerle prior to the groundbreaking ceremony for the company's new location at the Tanners Creek Business Park in Oakwood.**

**OAKWOOD** — Golden shovels — gripped by state and local government officials as well as local and international business leaders — dug into the ground ahead of schedule Friday morning as rain threatened to spoil the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Atlanta Biologicals headquarters in Oakwood.

The German-based biotechnology manufacturer is moving to Tanner Creek Business Park off Thurmon Tanner Parkway. A new 36,000-square-foot facility will headquarter the international company's North American operations. The headquarters is expected to open in 2013 and bring about 30 skilled jobs to Hall County.

The overcast skies didn't deter the arrival of Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle and other government officials from attending the celebration of the local economic development. And in turn, the rain held off during the event.

Cagle, a Hall County native, highlighted the economic impact and celebrated the county's growing footprint in life sciences research.

"Not only do we celebrate this groundbreaking in terms of jobs and a different way of life for so many people," Cagle said, "but we also look to the future and think about the lives that are going to be saved because of the research and technology that will be coming out of a such a wonderful company."

Cagle noted the public, private and educational partnerships that make such news possible.

"When you think about Georgia Tech and Emory University and also the CDC ... these are things that create the synergy that's going to be necessary to allow companies like this to not only be successful in the short term but in the long term," he said.

According to Tim Evans, vice president of economic development for the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, wooing Atlanta Biologicals to Hall was years in the making.

Renate Gerle, president of Atlanta Biologicals, said "When growth needs caused Atlanta Biologicals to consider a larger facility, we started an exhaustive search for a suitable building site. Hall County became our top choice for many reasons."

She credited the chamber of commerce, local economic plans and Tanner Creek developers, the Wayne Co., for offering an enticing business environment.

"The area, with its sheer beauty of lake and mountains, offers a high quality of life for our staff and will greatly assist us in attracting and retaining the best talent in our industry," she added.

Oakwood Mayor Lamar Scroggs said the new industry is a good fit for the city too.

"It is a good, clean, viable industry that we need in the community," he said.

From the city's perspective, it's a long-awaited taste of success after the 10-plus years of planning that went into constructing Thurmon Tanner Parkway for industrial and commercial development.