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Oakwood welcomes Czech manufacturer Company plans to expand

OAKWOOD — Hall County welcomed the state’s first manufacturer from the Czech Republic on Monday, as local and international dignitaries assembled for the custom automotive fabricator’s official grand opening.

ALBAform Inc. is a subsidiary of Czech parent company ALBA-METAL, which designs, develops and manufactures precision metal components for the automotive industry. It supplies about 30 international automakers, including Porsche, Ford and Mercedes.

The company opened its production facility at the Oakwood South Industrial Park in April and currently employs 20 people with plans to expand to 30 by mid-2014.

“The Southeastern U.S. corridor is the ideal place for our company to locate as an automotive supplier, providing the necessary resources and tools for timely production and logistical operations,” said Lindsay A. Roseler, CEO of ALBAform. “Additionally, Oakwood, Ga., sustains the workforce and customer base to build a strong foundation for the company’s future.”

The morning ceremony included a host of local, state and international officials.

Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle said he looked forward to what the company would grow into as its market share increased and as a long-term relationship is fostered between the two countries.

“ALBAform’s grand opening, the first by any Czech manufacturer in Georgia, marks a milestone in the business relationship between Georgia and the Czech Republic,” Cagle said. “It’s an honor to be a part of this historic occasion, and I look forward to following the company’s success in our state as well as the other opportunities for commerce that may arise thanks to the path this company has forged.”

Jan Kohout, the Czech Republic’s minister of foreign affairs, lauded the family-owned company, saying the mindset of the owners would represent the Czech Republic well in Georgia.

Czech Republic Ambassador to the U.S. Petr Gandalovic said in the two years in his position, “I’ve seen a solid growth, with pretty much balanced imports and exports.” But, continued Gandalovic, “It’s more than just doing business; it’s creating jobs.

“The Czech Republic and the United States have long collaborated on their joint commitment to facilitate economic development and raise investment between our allied nations. In recent years, the Czech Republic has emerged as an investor, and ALBAform’s investment in Georgia reflects this trend.”

Hall County Board of Commissioners Chairman Richard Mecum called the company progressive and young but with a “seasoned team of experts.”

“Their presence here will only enhance the international business community we have here,” he said.

According to the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce