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### Owens-Illinois to expand

By Tom MacCallum/Richmond County Daily Journal  
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Owens-Illinois Incorporated of Hamlet has announced a \$10 million manufacturing production line expansion for a new product.

Rick Sago, Richmond County director of development, said the expansion will require an additional 18 to 24 new employees.

Gene Escolas, O-I human resource director, said the plant now has 165 hourly and 22 salaried employees.

He said some employees were being sent to other facilities for training with the type of equipment to be installed at the Hamlet plant, and Richmond Community College has been approached to assist with training new employees.

Escolas said they hoped to have the new production beginning operation by June 1.



For Gatorade

The new machinery will provide the plant with "compression molding" capabilities in producing 43mm plastic closures for the Quaker Oats Gatorade product line.

Escolas said the new line will be exclusively for the Gatorade product.

Adding the new machinery will not require any expansion of the plant's facility in Hamlet, he said.

O-I in Hamlet already uses mechanical methods such as injection, rotary molding, lining and assembly in producing plastic closures for many customers.

Excellent news

"Owens-Illinois' decision to expand its facility in Richmond County is excellent news," said Jim Fain, N.C. Secretary of Commerce.

"With more than 100 locations on five continents, the company had many expansion options," he said, "so we are very pleased we can provide the business-friendly climate that companies like Owens-Illinois are looking for."

He said North Carolina ranks ninth for employment in the plastics industry and the O-I expansion would further strengthen the state's reputation with that industry.

"The positive business environment which has been created in Richmond County is paying off with the continued strength and growth of our existing industries," said Kenneth Robinette, chairman of the Richmond County Board of Commissioners.

Richmond County's staff is also working with the N.C. Department of Commerce, RCC and Progress Energy to assist with the expansion.

Doing well

County Manager Jim Haynes said, "We are happy to see industries already located in the county continue to do well and grow."



"Often we don't give credit to growth from within as economic development when in fact it is a sure sign the business health of the county is good and improving," Haynes said.

"We welcome the growth announced by Owens-Illinois and look forward to continuing a rewarding relationship," he said.

O-I is one of the world's largest closure manufacturers. The company produced plastic closures for the first time in 1932.

In addition to manufacturing facilities in the United States and Puerto Rico, O-I has plastic manufacturing operations in South America, Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

RCC assists

Sago said he was pleased that the state, through its community colleges, will provide training of new employees without cost.

The Focused Industrial Training Center, under the direction of Herb Smith at RCC, last year provided customized training for 13 area industries.

It provides assessment of training needs and develops programs to meet those needs with emphasis on skilled and semiskilled workers. If necessary, RCC will also provide the space needed for training.



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