

NOW HIRING

Kia begins taking job applications for West Point production positions THE VALLEY TIMES-NEWS

WEST POINT — Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia has opened the application process for its plant in West Point, company and State of Georgia officials announced Tuesday morning at the Callaway Center for International Business Development in LaGrange.

KMMG President and Chief Executive Officer B.M. Ahn made the official announcement after comments by state officials involved in the state's economic development and training departments.

"I am greatly pleased to announce as of today applications are open," Ahn said before a large Kia banner on the wall behind him was uncovered to reveal a "now hiring" statement.

Ahn told a large audience assembled for the announcement that Kia team members are looking for community support to help the company meet its challenges. He noted that the state is hard at work on creating Exit 6 on Interstate 85 and that construction of the Kia facility is quite visible at the West Point site.

"Physically, Kia is coming," Ahn said, "and I hope many people will apply."

Before Ahn's announcement, Ken Stewart, commissioner of the Department of Economic Development; Michael Thurmond, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Labor; and Ron Jackson, commissioner of the Department of Technical and Adult Education, spoke about the state's role in the Kia project. After Ahn's comments, KMMG Human Resources Director Randy Jackson outlined the pay and benefits plan for prospective Kia employees.

Stewart said events like Tuesday morning's are "what economic development is all about." He mentioned all the big numbers that are associated with the Kia project — \$1.2 billion in investment, a 2,200-acre site, 300,000 vehicles per year and a \$4 billion economic impact on the state.

"Economic development is about quality of life," Stewart said, and praised the teamwork at all levels that led to Kia coming to West Point.

"Georgia workers now have a chance to share in the rewards of economic development," Stewart said. "Tangible results are right around the corner."

Thurmond said that his job was to see that every job at Kia is filled by a Georgian.

"This is a great day for Georgia, for our economy and for Georgia workers," Thurmond said. "We have come together to build a coalition of progress."

He pointed out that 80 Department of Labor volunteers were at the Callaway Center that morning to assist in job applications, and that the department was constantly at work helping Georgians find jobs, whether they are white or blue collar positions.

"It's not the color of the collar but the green of the dollar," Thurmond said.

Ron Jackson said his department was “ready, willing and will provide” Kia with the training it needs for team members in West Point. He said the state’s Quick Start program will soon be training the people who will be working at the Kia plant.

“We pledge that the work force you need will be there on the day you need it,” Jackson said.

Randy Jackson outlined the pay and benefits package for Kia team members. He emphasized that Kia’s success will be dependent upon the performance of its team members, and that the company had developed a competitive and flexible package of pay and benefits to ensure the well being, financial security, satisfaction and work/life balance for team members and their families.

The pay at KMMG will range from a starting \$14.90 up to \$23.50 for production team members, and will start at \$20.80 and top out at \$27 per hour for maintenance and die maintenance team members. There will be a rotating shift premium of \$1 an hour for second shift work, he said, a bonus program and overtime pay.

The company will offer medical, prescription drug, dental and vision insurance, basic and dependent life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment coverage, short and long-term disability insurance, a 401(k) savings retirement plan, two weeks of paid vacation, an average of 14 annual paid holidays, reimbursement for education, an employee assistance program, discount group auto and home insurance, company-paid clothing, a discount vehicle purchase program and safety glasses and shoes.

Kia team members will have access to an occupational health center at the plant 24 hours a day, an onsite banking center and full cafeteria service, he said. He stressed that performance expectations will be high for Kia team members.

“We will expect team members to contribute their knowledge, experience and ideas to assist KMMG in growing our organization,” Jackson said. “Our plant will have a friendly and productive atmosphere.”

He said there would be eight phases in the team member selection process. The first phase is filling out the online application. Applications for Kia positions will be accepted only online at the website www.kiajobsingorgia.com.

Phase 2 will involve collecting, reviewing and sorting the applications per Kia standards, Jackson said. Phase 3 is an orientation and screening process, and Phase 4 will involve preemployment training and assessment. Jackson said that would involve a 40-hour process for production employees and a one-day process for others.

Phase 5 will be a preliminary job offer, he said. Phase 6 will involve a background check and medical and drug screenings. Phase 7 is a written job offer, and Phase 8 is post-employment training.

Jackson concluded his remarks by saying KMMG is enthused by the support it has received from the community.

A question-and-answer period followed. Several questions centered upon the availability of Kia jobs for Alabama residents. Randy Jackson acknowledged the fine line that exists between the two states and the interaction that takes place locally. He said Kia is encouraging all people to apply.

“It breaks down to helping people,” Jackson said.

Thurmond pointed out that his job was to put Georgians to work, and that the Department of Labor's 53 career centers around the state were ready to assist with Kia applications. He said the state has a 20-person call center ready to assist people. It can be reached at 1-877-365-5421, a toll-free call. Also, Thurmond said the DOL has 84 computers set up at the Callaway Center at West Georgia Technical College for people to use who don't have access to the Internet elsewhere.