

Silver Eagle Bus Manufacturing Lands in Gallatin

Long-term Plans Call for Creation of More Than 500 Jobs

Silver Eagle Bus Manufacturing, Inc. today joined Governor Phil Bredesen, Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner Matt Kisber, and local officials in announcing the company's relocation to Gallatin, Tennessee. Although Silver Eagle will offer only a few dozen positions in its temporary location while it constructs a new facility, once fully operational the company's business plan anticipates hiring more than 500 people. The company will be relocating from its Brownsville, Texas, location.

"We are very pleased that Silver Eagle has chosen to make their new home here in Gallatin," Kisber said. "This community is a fine example of the attractive workforce, strategic location and high quality of life that characterize Tennessee. We at ECD and our partners in Gallatin look forward to a long and meaningful relationship with this growing company."

Company officials said that after reviewing several buildings and sites on the short list, once it decided to go with a greenfield and new construction option, Gallatin immediately became the top choice of communities.

"After our initial go-round of looking at buildings and sites, we had Gallatin ranked as the best community for our company," COO Craig Hanloh said. "The problem was that we thought a couple of buildings might actually work for us and we had some very specific building criteria so we had to exhaust those possibilities first. Once we decided to go greenfield, we called the Gallatin EDA and asked them to help us make this happen."

The company reviewed sites in middle and western Tennessee as well as Ohio, Michigan, Alabama, and Mississippi and negotiated with a handful of communities from a short list over the past year before settling on Gallatin. The Tennessee Valley Authority's economic development department and the Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Association joined the Gallatin Economic Development Agency and Kisber's team in the recruiting process.

Mayor JoAnn Graves said she and the City Council welcome Silver Eagle and praised the cooperative efforts of the City, its Economic Development Agency, county officials, and the Board of Education in putting all of the necessary pieces in place to make the relocation possible.

"This is truly exciting news for our City and entire area," Mayor Graves said. "Silver Eagle was once the premier bus for country music stars and other entertainers. Craig and Robin Hanloh have rejuvenated the brand and are re-establishing its prominence. We're excited that they chose Gallatin because of our attitude toward and appreciation of business and industry. This announcement further proves our commitment to economic

development. I am confident that Silver Eagle will be very pleased with this decision for years to come.ö

Gallatin officials said that not having a suitable building to meet company needs was far and above the sticking point in the early recruitment stages, but once the project shifted its search scope, the challenge shifted to finding an appropriate temporary solution which it did in asking Sumner County and Sumner County School Board officials to lease some out buildings on the new school bus maintenance and storage facility on Airport Road, less than two miles from the site on which the company will build a 150,000 square foot facility.

öSilver Eagle expressed to us early on that they were impressed with Gallatin's emphasis on being a truly business-friendly city,ö Gallatin Economic Development Agency Executive Director Clay Walker said. öOnce they advised us that some of the buildings had been eliminated we became hopeful it would come back to us, then when they called to say all of the buildings had been eliminated we knew we were in good shape because they had expressed early on that Gallatin was their community of choice. County Executive Anthony Holt, Director of Schools Benny Bills, and Mike Fussell and the school board then stepped up when I approached them about leasing part of the bus facility. And Steve Nichols (School Board Facilities Director) was simply as good and cooperative a person as you could ever hope for in working out the details.ö

Holt said that this is a textbook example of how the County supports its cities' efforts in bringing new investment and new jobs into the area.

öIt is extremely gratifying to have a company of Silver Eagle's caliber relocate to Sumner County,ö Holt said. öThis move represents positive, cooperative efforts between county government, the Board of Education, and the City of Gallatin. In the long run, what benefits one of our cities benefits Sumner County as a whole.ö

During its production of over four decades, some 8,000 Eagle coaches were built in four different countries on two continents and were the trademark of Continental Trailways for over three decades. In the 1980's, Silver Eagle was the premium custom coach conversion platform for the entertainment industry, known for its unique torsion suspension system that provided an incomparable övelvety smoothö ride.

Craig and Robin Hanloh began the rebirthing of Silver Eagle in 2004 and Silver Eagle Bus Manufacturing Inc. was formed to manufacture Eagle Buses once again. The company designs and builds coaches for various uses including entertainment tour buses, custom recreational vehicles, public transportation, and various government contracts.

öWe couldn't be happier to be setting up shop in Gallatin,ö CEO Robin Hanloh said. öThis community has demonstrated from the beginning that it responds to the needs of business and as a relatively young company that responsiveness and sense of partnership is important to us. We look forward to many successful years in Gallatin.ö

While at the temporary location, company officials expect employment numbers will not exceed three dozen, but once the new facility is finished they anticipate adding more than 100 employees a year for the next three years. All hiring is being handled through the Career Center in Gallatin and employment inquiries should be made at the center at 175 College Street or by calling 615-451-5800.

For more information about Silver Eagle buses and the company's history, visit www.silvereaglebus.com.