

Habersham welcomes new industry

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Habersham County welcomed its first tenant to the expanded industrial park last week.

Glenroe Technologies, a maker of orthodontic products headquartered in Bradenton, Fla., plans to open a new manufacturing facility in the industrial park complex Dec. 1.

On Friday, several business leaders and officials from around the county braved a brisk, windy morning to attend a Habersham Chamber of Commerce groundbreaking ceremony to welcome the first commercial business to locate on the 50-acre commercial complex owned by the Habersham County Industrial Development Authority.

Glenroe will occupy Lot 7 of the industrial park complex, located on Industrial Boulevard near the Habersham County Airport outside Baldwin. Chamber Executive Director Ed Nichols said it was an honor to welcome the first tenant, and was excited about the employment opportunities Glenroe will bring to the county.

Glenroe President John Bozman said shortly after the plant opens Dec. 1, it will hire approximately 50 new employees - almost all of whom will be hired locally. The company is headquartered in Bradenton, Fla., however Bozman said few, if any, employees from Florida will be located here.

Bozman is a native of Gainesville, and said he is excited about being located in Habersham County, and the opportunities provided by its convenient location and workforce.

"We think this is exactly what we were looking for," he said. "There's a stable workforce, and it's close to I-985, so we can access anything we need."

On Monday, Interim County Manager Lewis Canup said getting the first tenant into the industrial park is a step forward for bringing more industry to Habersham County. He pointed out that there are six other lots on the 50-acre complex, which the county hopes will attract other industries.

"We feel it's terribly important to have industry in the county and provide good jobs for our people," Canup said. "By Glenroe being there, it will open doors for other industries. We need to get other sites ready, get the infrastructure in place and then try to sell people on coming to our county to work and provide jobs."

Canup said Glenroe will be provided with water and sewer through the city of Baldwin. He said the city already is working to annex lots six and seven into Baldwin, and eventually plans to annex the entire complex.



Glenroe Technologies President John Bozman and Habersham Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Ed Nichols talk at Friday's groundbreaking for the new Glenroe manufacturing plant in the Habersham County Industrial Park. Staff/Benjamin Price

Baldwin Mayor Mark Reed said at the groundbreaking he also is excited to welcome a new business, and the jobs that come with it.

"We're excited to see this investment here, and see them providing jobs here," Reed said.

Some of those jobs may be provided by recent graduates from North Georgia Technical College.

NGTC President Dr. Ruth Nichols was on hand Friday, and said several of the school's graduates from the certified manufacturing programs would be applying for jobs.

Friday's groundbreaking had been postponed twice due to severe weather resulting from hurricanes.

Ed Nichols said it was great to finally hold the ceremony, even if some of the structure already was built.

"It's not every day we get to welcome a great new industry here," Ed Nichols said. "The people here, and the spirit of the people here, are what attracted them to Habersham. There are a lot of individuals working on this great opportunity for employment."