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General News

Colorado manufacturing plant moving to Oklahoma

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OKLAHOMA CITY – A company that produces products and software for the natural gas industry moved its corporate office to Oklahoma City last year and in April plans to relocate its manufacturing plant from Colorado to Oklahoma.

Universal Well Site Solutions was started in 1997 in Fort Collins, Colo.

Three years ago, Cathy Conner, now the company's CEO, and a group of investors, purchased 85 percent of the company.

Conner began a slow migration toward Oklahoma, and by the end of 2009 she plans to have 50 employees in Oklahoma. A five-year plan calls for an Oklahoma City staff of 225. The company currently has a staff of about 35 spread out between Colorado, Wyoming, Texas and Oklahoma.

The company creates products and software used to automate wells, monitor gas flow and water flow measurements, and send that information to engineers' computers in real time.

"All the equipment on the well site needs to talk nowadays," Conner said. "Our solution is totally integrated to talk immediately."

The manufacturing arm of the company is moving here because Conner said much of their business is in the Sooner State.

"We feel like the center of oil or gas is Oklahoma City or Houston," she said. "We preferred to come to Oklahoma City."

The projected average salary for the new workers is in the \$45,000-to-\$50,000 range. Conner said only a small percentage of the Colorado workers will relocate to Oklahoma.

Despite economic concerns causing many companies to scale back, Conner said Universal is growing because they serve a niche market focusing on older, low-pressure fields.

The company also offers training and project management through the life of each project.

Universal will need about 24,000 square feet of industrial space. Conner said they have looked at several options around the city and have not yet determined if they will look to buy or lease space.

Randy Lacey, with Grubb & Ellis Levy Beffort, said there is space available, but it will probably be a multi-tenant setup.

"They're not going to find a free-standing 25,000-square-foot building," he said. "We have a good supply of buildings that can accommodate a user of that size, most of which are multi-tenant."

Lacey said some of the options might be the Santa Fe area north of the state Capitol, and buildings near Interstate 40 and Meridian Avenue and on the southeast side of the metro area.

Buying a building might pose a bit more of a challenge.

“If they were looking to buy, that is a needle in a haystack,” Lacey said.

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