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Auto parts company bringing 35 jobs to BG

JENNA MINK, The Daily News, jmink@bgdailynews.com/783-3246

As the automotive market struggles with closures and bankruptcies, the local auto industry might soon get a boost from a new company.

TMS Automotive, a startup company based in Elizabethtown, plans to open in Bowling Green by July, bringing 35 jobs to the area.

The \$2.17 million plant will locate in the old, 32,500-square-foot Nyloncraft building on Graham Avenue before eventually building its own facility, president and owner Michael Hall said.

“We feel it’s full-speed ahead,” Hall said. “Even in a downed **economy**, we’re taking a step forward.”

That step started in Elizabethtown, where the new company has been operating on a trial basis for the past year. The company works with auto suppliers, cleaning and removing rust from auto parts and giving them a protective coating.

The company services two customers – Bowling Green Metalforming and Cannon Automotive Solutions, both located in Bowling Green. TMS Automotive, one of four auto companies Hall owns, traces its roots to Cannon Automotive Solutions. One of Hall’s associate companies performed some work for the Cannon factory in Canada. When Cannon opened its Bowling Green plant, that working relationship continued, spurring the creation of TMS Automotive.

In fact, Hall decided to locate TMS Automotive in Bowling Green because of its close proximity to those customers.

“It’s pretty expensive for those guys to ship to Elizabethtown and turn around and ship (back) to Bowling Green,” he said. “We’ll be able to service their needs a little bit better.”

TMS Automotive’s work is a “key component” to Cannon Automotive Solution’s business, and the nearby location will help both Cannon and other manufacturers that need the service, said Andre Desouza, Cannon plant manager.

“It will serve as another source for any manufacturing plant,” he said. “For us, it’s equally important. It provides us with a local presence. It will be easier for us to get things done.”

The Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority offered TMS Automotive up to \$260,000 in tax incentives to locate in Bowling Green – the plant will be financed through investments and bank loans, Hall said.

For now, company officials have hired about six management employees and are not taking applications. More workers will be hired over the next couple of years; the company will use local employment agencies to find workers, Hall said.

Hall was concerned about opening a new, auto-related business in the midst of a nationwide auto crisis, he said, but he’s confident that his customers will remain viable.

Cannon has been affected by the industry downturn but, “we’re holding our own, really,” Desouza said. “We’re very fortunate.”

Cannon, unlike many auto suppliers, has not laid off workers. The local company makes components for Ford that, so far, has weathered the auto crisis.

As for the new company, orders are already in place and production will start as soon as the doors open, Hall said.

“All we need to do is get the doors open and get the machines running and start producing,” he said. “Bowling Green is a very productive city right now. The industrial base in Bowling Green is just awesome.”

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