

BIG CAT'S REACH

How Caterpillar could benefit local business

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Caterpillar Inc.'s Aug. 12 announcement that it will locate a new manufacturing plant in Victoria means 500 new jobs and a tax base increase for Victoria.

But the city and county aren't the only ones that stand to benefit from the venture. Here, industry pros give their take on how other businesses and individuals can gain from Caterpillar's upcoming move to the Crossroads.



BOOST IN CONSTRUCTION JOBS

The project means construction positions for the plant and also for any supporting businesses that come down the road in the future. That can mean additional work for local construction companies and increased business for hotels, motels and other sites incoming workers will use for temporary housing.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR OTHER CITIES

At Caterpillar's new Seguin location, the company's goal is to bring a majority of goods in from within a 50-mile radius to save on transportation costs. If the same applies to the Victoria site, cities like Gonzales, Hallettsville and Yoakum are in prime locations to act as a good central ground.



ANCILLARY SERVICES

From janitorial services to machining parts and even greasing down equipment, Caterpillar will likely utilize help from various companies throughout the region. Now is a good time for existing companies to evaluate their business practices and determine whether they might be able to assist Caterpillar down the road.

500 NEW EMPLOYEES

It isn't just the company that will utilize business services. The infusion of employees means more people using dry cleaners, going to banks and taking part in the same daily activities most everyone else does. This offers growth opportunities to existing businesses and potential new business opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs.

TRANSPORTATION

The project means additional transportation moving in and out of Victoria with parts, finished products and the like. That means potential for existing trucking companies to grow, expand business practices or even develop partnerships with other companies in nearby cities



COLLEGE STUDENTS

Although extensive training is necessary for many roles with Caterpillar, college students will likely be able to find work with retail sites, restaurants and other service businesses that open or expand due to the company's Victoria site. And, with the University of Houston-Victoria bringing on freshmen and sophomores, the area will likely boast more job-seeking college students than in the past.

HOMEWORK

Businesses that plan to expand or cater to Caterpillar's new project have a while to ready themselves, since production isn't slated to begin until mid-2012. Now is a good time to look over business plans and see if any changes need to be made to grow the business. Different business practices are likely necessary for companies hoping to grow, versus companies looking to mitigate risks. There is also time to click onto Caterpillar's website to learn more about the company or peruse the newspaper to attend events where business owners can meet with Caterpillar representatives.

