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The Shovel Will Hit the Dirt in White Pigeon as Forest River Manufacturing Breaks Ground on New Site

WHITE PIGEON, MI – On Wednesday, May 13, 2015 at 9:00 am, Forest River Manufacturing will break ground on its future Michigan site to be located at 500 West Chicago Road, White Pigeon, MI 49099.



In January 2015, this world leader in the recreational vehicle industry that produces travel trailers, fifth wheels, pop-up tent campers, park model trailers, destination trailers, commercial vehicles, buses, pontoons and more announced it will launch new products in White Pigeon in three newly constructed 100,000-square-foot facilities. With more than \$1.6 billion in annual revenue, 120 plants and 9,000 employees worldwide, this Berkshire Hathaway Company is headquartered in Elkhart, Indiana.

Ultimately creating 396 new jobs over three years, the project will generate a total capital investment of more than \$7 million. The project is supported by State of Michigan with a \$1.6 Million Community Development Block Grant for on-the-job training and a \$350,000 Business Development Program Grant for infrastructure, a Michigan Department of Transportation Road Grant, a \$936,000 Twelve-Year Tax Abatement from the Village of White Pigeon and \$425,000 in Workforce Training Funding from Michigan Works!

Local leaders in attendance will include Mike Stump, Forest River Manufacturing; Ken Jones, President of St. Joseph County Economic Development Corporation; John Dobberteen, Chairman of St. Joseph County Commission; Dan Czajkowski, President of Village of White Pigeon; Susan Novakoski, Director of Business Attraction of Michigan Economic Development Corporation; and Ron Kitchens, President and Chief Executive Officer of Southwest Michigan First.

“Positive changes in Michigan’s business climate, such as the recent right-to-work legislation prompted us to take a look at Michigan for this project. We’ve had a great reception and are looking forward to operating in White Pigeon,” said Mike Stump of Forest River Manufacturing.

"Making this kind of an investment in St. Joseph County is an extraordinary demonstration of commitment. The Economic Development Corporation will work to ensure Forest River knows our community is fully committed to their success," said Ken Jones of the St. Joseph County Economic Development Corporation.

"The county has been working on a number of strategies for growth and making this area a more attractive place for businesses and residents alike. We are pleased this groundwork has played a significant role in the pursuit of this business opportunity," added John Dobberteen of the St. Joseph County Commission.

Susan Novakoski of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation commented, "This project will boost Michigan's economy by generating new opportunities for St. Joseph County families and supporting suppliers. It will help to bring new opportunities to the Village of White Pigeon with the creation of new jobs and new skill sets developed in the local workforce."

"The project was like a 'perfect storm' when it came together. I credit the economic development incentives, the price of the land, governmental units working together and projects like the renovation of the wastewater treatment plant. All involved in the effort should take a moment to celebrate," added Dan Czajkowski of the Village of White Pigeon.

"We thank Forest River Manufacturing for choosing St. Joseph County to accelerate its business forward. The strong partnerships within the county, the state's support, the county's strategic location and the local workforce all came together in a tenacious effort to attract Forest River. We're excited about the jobs creation in White Pigeon and what it does to strengthen the region's economy," commented Ron Kitchens of Southwest Michigan First.

About Forest River Manufacturing

Forest River Manufacturing, Inc., is an incubator where innovative ideas thrive and flourish as we strive to adapt to changing market and consumer demands. At Forest River, we are innovators, entrepreneurs, creators, designers and visionaries working together. Our commitment goes beyond the manufacturing process as we invest in creating those exceptional moments of laughter and joy. Learn more at www.forestriverinc.com.

About Southwest Michigan First

Founded in 1999 on the principle that the most powerful force for change is a job, Southwest Michigan First is an organization of privately funded economic development advisors who act as the catalyst for economic growth in Southwest Michigan. For more information about Southwest Michigan First, please visit us at www.southwestmichiganfirst.com, or call 269.553.9588.



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