



**For Immediate Release
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Moore County, NC

Niche Manufacturer Locates in Aberdeen

A long-vacant industrial building has a fresh coat of paint and is functional again with the relocation of an Atlanta-based niche manufacturer to Moore County. The 12,000 square-foot building on Jordan Place in Aberdeen's Sandhills Industrial Park is now the headquarters for MetChem, a processor of nickel and cobalt-based chemicals.

Tom Cirigliano, owner and President of MetChem, established the company eighteen years ago with headquarters in Atlanta and a manufacturing arrangement in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Last year, he made the decision to bring the nickel production portion of the business in-house because it had become too expensive to ship the raw materials to Fort Wayne. At the same time, Cirigliano felt Atlanta was too congested and lacked the quality of life he desired.

In making the decision of where to relocate, Cirigliano thought of Moore County because he had been coming to Pinehurst to play golf since he was a teenager in the 1970s. "My father was a big golfer and I've just always enjoyed coming to Pinehurst to play", Cirigliano said. "Moore County has a great lifestyle and the stability of the area over the years was also appealing."

Cirigliano and his wife, Beth, have a home in Pinehurst. Mrs. Cirigliano is a music teacher splitting her teaching time between Southern Pines Primary and Academy Heights Elementary School.

MetChem began renovating and setting up equipment in the building last November. Cirigliano was pleasantly surprised at the responsiveness and resources of local businesses that helped get the facility up and running. Thanks to Nolarec Industries of Aberdeen, Mingin Enterprises of West End, Norton Electric of Laurel Hill, WEI Energy Services of Seven Lakes and Progress Energy, among others, it took only 8 weeks

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to modify the facility to accommodate MetChem's manufacturing equipment. "It was truly amazing how all of these great people came together to help us and our needs were met so quickly", Cirigliano said.

The company began operations this past February. All of the nickel production takes place in the Aberdeen facility, while the cobalt production remains in Fort Wayne and is handled by a contractor.

Today, the company employs 7 workers and has made a \$1.2 million investment in Moore County. MetChem has agreed to eventually purchase the Jordan Place building it now leases, and anticipates its sales revenue to continue growing each year. Howard Bradshaw, Plant Manager, says they plan to apply for ISO certification early next year. "We will continue to explore ways of making our manufacturing processes more efficient, as well as finding new applications for our products", he said. Bradshaw relocated from Atlanta and now lives in Pinehurst.

MetChem's production begins with a raw material imported from Queensland, Australia that arrives in the United States via the Port of Savannah, Georgia. The company processes the material for various applications including catalyst manufacturing for oil refining industries, electroplating, and ceramics and glass pigmenting. MetChem has customers throughout the United States and in Canada.

The entire production process is closed-loop, meaning it is clean with no discharge, odor or environmental impact.

"MetChem has a very specialized process for finish-processing these metal-based chemicals, which in turn are used in specialized industries", said Ray Ogden, Executive Director of Moore County Partners in Progress, the economic development organization serving Moore County. "The company is a truly a niche manufacturer, which is exactly the type of industry that we are trying to recruit and that fits in well in Moore County."

"Although it's not a huge company, it has made a significant capital investment in the County, they're employing people in good jobs, and there are no environmental concerns", Ogden said. "We're certainly glad they're here."

For more information about MetChem, visit www.cobalt-nickel.com. Moore County Partners in Progress is the economic development organization for the County. For more information, visit www.moorebusiness.org.

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