

From *The Pilot*, January 17, 2007

Firms Get Help to Relocate

BY: Florence Gilkeson: Senior Writer

Two industries will receive financial assistance for relocation costs as a result of action the Moore County Board of Commissioners took Tuesday night.

The board voted to commit the county to \$20,000 for PACE Inc. and \$5,000 for Thermal Metal Treating Inc. The town of Southern Pines will match the county allocation to PACE, and the town of Aberdeen will match the allocation to Thermal Metal Treating.

Ray Ogden, executive director of Partners in Progress, explained that PACE received similar commitments last year when plans were under way to move manufacturing operations from Maryland into short-term space at Aberdeen.

However, the facility in Aberdeen was not large enough for the company to move all of its equipment, and it is now making plans to occupy its new facility in the Southern Pines Corporate Park.

"The company ran out of space before it could get moved," Ogden said.

Ogden said that space constraints in Aberdeen prevented PACE from meeting its \$500,000 capital equipment requirement to meet all terms of the previous agreement, so the company has received no relocation assistance.

PACE plans to lease a new 37,000-square-foot building in the corporate park. Ogden said the company has exceeded the employment requirement of 35 workers.

Once the equipment valued at more than \$500,000 is moved into the new building, PACE expects to increase operations and eventually to employ as many as 100 persons, who will be paid at or above the county's average median wage, Ogden advised.

Ogden said the company expects to move into its new building by June. For this reason, the board agreed to commit the county to a \$20,000 appropriation from the 2007-08 budget.

Commissioner Tim Lea made the motion to commit the relocation funds from the next year's budget. Commissioner Larry Caddell made the second, and approval was unanimous.

Thermal Metal Treating has had an operation in Aberdeen for about 20 years, Ogden said. Now the company plans to expand through the purchase and relocation of a custom door and cabinet hardware company, to be moved from Santa Fe, N.M., to Aberdeen. The

company plans to create at least eight new jobs and to make a capital investment of \$300,000.

On a motion by Commissioner Cindy Morgan and a second by Caddell, this commitment likewise received unanimous approval.

Partners in Progress is the cooperative economic development nonprofit serving local governments and other economic initiatives throughout the county.

In other action Tuesday, the commissioners approved a \$116,600 contract for color digital orthophotography with Kucera International Inc. for service in Moore and Hoke counties. The joint contract includes updated building footprints.

Finance Officer Lisa L. Hughes said the county sought requests for proposals from 14 prospective vendors and received responses from 11 vendors, seven of which were evaluated by a selection committee made up of county personnel and personnel from Hoke County.

The company is to fly the county between February and March. The contract calls for raw data to be available within 10 days thereafter, with the final product available within 120 days.

Florence Gilkeson can be reached at 947-4962 or by e-mail at florence@thepilot.com.