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Organization helps Toyo get ‘Quick Start’ to expansion

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Georgia Quick Start will partner with Toyo Tire North America Manufacturing, Inc. as the tire production company’s facility in White undergoes its fourth expansion in 10 years.

According to a press release from Chattahoochee Technical College, representatives from the Technical College System of Georgia and Toyo Tire were present at the Toyo facility for a signing ceremony that marked the official launch of Quick Start’s workforce training program for the expansion. A division of the Technical College System of Georgia, Quick Start has worked with Toyo during each of its expansions over the years. The organization provides no-cost training to qualified businesses in Georgia and has done so for more than 40 years, according to its website. It helps both new and expanding industries as they prepare their employees for new developments in

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the workplace.

“The value of Quick Start’s training is ... we help assess candidates and then also develop job-specific training after (the company hires) new employees,” said Rodger Brown, executive director of marketing and strategic media at Georgia Quick Start. “We’ve been there (with Toyo) since their beginning and have come back to support them with customized training.”

This time around, customized training specifically meant assistance with training for Toyo Tire’s Advanced Tire Operation Module, or A.T.O.M., system. According to their website, A.T.O.M. is Toyo’s proprietary, highly-automated tire production system designed for multi-product, small-lot production of quality products with reduced space needs. The A.T.O.M. system is modular, so is scalable to adapt to changes in production plans or in response to market demands.

“They need a custom-designed system, so we provided them with custom-designed training that prepares the employees to operate their A.T.O.M. system, which is the core to their entire production process,” Brown said.

According the press release, once the new equipment is installed, it has the potential to double the facility’s production from 4 million to 8 million tires per year. The current expansion is also going to make room for 450 new jobs in a workplace that already employs 1,000.

Toyo Tire Training Manager Kary Gilkeson said Quick Start’s partnership has been greatly valued from the very beginning.

“It’s been very significant. In fact, the services of Georgia Quick Start were a factor in Toyo deciding to locate in Georgia at all,” Gilkeson pointed out.

After deciding to locate their facility in Georgia and breaking ground in 2004, Gilkeson said Toyo found itself six months ahead of schedule due to Quick Start’s services. Now, a decade later, the company finds itself again ahead of schedule as it seeks to grow its presence once more.

“Truly Toyo’s growth has exceeded everybody’s expectations,” noted Gilkeson. “We’re ahead of our timing curve with this fourth expansion.”

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Brown said that process for assisting with a company's training are expansive. It requires careful analysis and consulting with subject matter experts from within a company itself.

"We discuss with the company and identify what the needs are. Then we do a study of the systems and the technology and its operations," he noted. "We come to understand all of the details of the process, then we break that down and develop training for each of the job position[s]."

In addition to technical training, Brown also pointed out that Quick Start assists with more intangible aspects of job training, including team building, communication and leadership. He feels that the organization's work is appreciated and that allows for a beneficial partnership as Toyo continues to expand.

"They respect what we do. And we are totally supportive of their growth because they've been so successful that they've been to grow this big this fast," he said of Toyo. "They've been a real asset to not just the community and the region, but to the state as a whole."

Chattahoochee Technical College President Ron Newcomb was present for Monday's signing and affirmed the need for effective approaches to training such as those provided by Quick Start.

"There are new, emerging technologies appearing every day," said Newcomb in the press release. "So, we can't train in the old way. We need to innovate, and not just with new skills, but by cultivating the flexibility it takes to respond quickly to change."

For information about Georgia Quick Start, visit www.GeorgiaQuickStart.org. To learn more about Toyo Tire North America Manufacturing, Inc., including company information or career opportunities, visit www.ToyoTires.com.

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