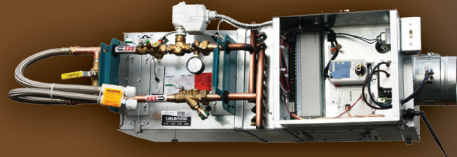


AEDC MAKES HVAC'S MOVE FROM CALIFORNIA TO ATHENS POSSIBLE



By Deborah Dane

WHILE THE EYES of Texas have been upon attracting businesses from other states, the eyes of Stella and John Karamanos have been upon Texas.

“We had known for quite some time that in order to truly grow our business, we would have to open a manufacturing facility outside of California,” says Mrs. Karamanos, co-owner of HVAC Manufacturing, Inc., which develops and manufactures products for the heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) industry. <http://www.hvacmfg.com>

The company was founded in San Jose, Ca., about 13 years ago by Mrs. Karamanos and her husband, John, who has over 30 years' experience in the HVAC industry and holds several patents. About 4 years ago they began investigating options for expansion. Following a thorough study of options in several states, they decided on Texas because of its favorable business climate and central location, which improves lead times and product distribution to their customers nationwide. They decided on the East Texas region because it is a manufacturing center and many companies in the HVAC industry are located here.

Mrs. Karamanos, who runs the daily operations of the company while her husband focuses on sales and new products, said the ultimate decision to locate their expansion facility in Athens was because of “the availability of a skilled labor pool, reduced energy/operations costs, and close proximity to our major suppliers.”

Lisa Denton, Executive Director of Athens Economic Development Corporation (AEDC), said that HVAC Manufacturing, Inc., is expected to create 25 jobs in Athens over the next five years and bring nearly \$1.5 million in investment and inventory to the city's tax base. The company will occupy the former Harry's Building Materials location at 1010 West Corsicana Street.

The AEDC Board approved incentives for HVAC Manufacturing, Inc., to include selling the facility to HVAC and carrying a 10-year note, approximately \$320,000 in building renovations, and a \$75,000 jobs incentive.

“We are excited to welcome HVAC Manufacturing to Athens,” said Ms. Denton. “They are providing quality job opportunities for our citizens, as well as helping diversify our industrial base. When the finish out of their facility is complete, Athens will benefit from another improved property located on the west Highway 31 corridor, which is an area where we have focused our attention over the past two years.”

Apparently, the feeling has been mutual, as Mrs. Karamanos says that “it has been a real pleasure to deal with Athens Economic Development Corporation. Without their help, we would not be able to make this move to Texas. They have been professional, flexible, and committed.”

In summary, Mrs. Karamanos says their new facility in Athens is “a perfect place” for an expansion location. Moving to Athens “will allow our business to grow tremendously. . . something that we are not able to do in California because of the heavy tax burdens, high cost of labor, and other costs there.”

EXPLORING THE COMMUNITY ROLE OF AEDC

