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SKYO INDUSTRIES

Tool maker set to open Ormond plant in October

Local operations to start in October; relocation from New York to be completed early next year

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ORMOND BEACH — Skyo Industries, a manufacturer of hand tools, is set to begin operating its new headquarters/production plant at the entrance of Ormond Beach Airport Business Park on Oct. 19, the company's president said.

Warren Anderson, the company's president, said he had initially hoped to open the plant in July, but said he is pleased to be within three months of that target date.

The company, which sells some products under its own Bestway Tools brand, primarily makes hand tools sold under the brands of its customers, including Ace Hardware and Snap-On Tools.

Anderson said Skyo, which is relocating from New York, is moving its operations here in stages and should be fully moved by the end of this coming February.

"The first equipment trucks will be arriving Sept. 14," he said.

The delay in moving had to do in part with purchasing and customizing the machinery needed to enable Skyo to produce goods at both locations for an interim period, Anderson said.

"It's like an amoeba that splits itself," Anderson said in a phone interview from New York. "We're in the middle of that split right now."

The Ormond Beach plant will start off assembling metal parts produced at the Skyo plant in New York into finished goods, he said.

Skyo's products include the 4-in-1, 10-in-1 and 11-in-1 screwdrivers sold under the Ace brand name at Ace Hardware stores across the country.

Anderson said he and his partners in the business — his brother and sister — will likely end up spending close to \$6 million to move their plant, including the \$2.1 million spent to acquire the 63,000-square-foot former StyleMark building at 2 Sunshine Blvd. in Ormond Beach as well as the cost of renovating and equipping it.



Ryan Haren, a sales associate at the Madden's Ace Hardware store in Holly Hill, holds up a display of Ace 4-in-1 screwdrivers. Skyo Industries, the private label manufacturer of those screwdrivers, is moving its operations from New York to Ormond Beach Airport Business Park where it plans to begin production in October. NEWS-JOURNAL/CLAYTON PARK.

Anderson said he and his siblings recently secured a \$1.1 million loan to help cover those costs. He said he is also in talks with a plastic-molding company in Pennsylvania that has expressed an interest in leasing a 17,000-square-foot space at the Ormond Beach plant to set up a second manufacturing operation.

The Pennsylvania company makes the plastic handles used in Skyo's hand tools. "He molds 3 million handles for me a year right now," Anderson said.

Anderson anticipates employing at least 10 to 11 workers at the Skyo plant in Ormond Beach by year's end and 35 to 40 by next summer.

The jobs will range in pay from just under \$18,000 a year for unskilled entry-level production workers up to \$75,000 for salaried senior management positions, he said, adding all but one or two will be hired locally.

Anderson said his son, Austen, 27, will initially oversee the Ormond Beach plant until he personally relocates here from New York with the rest of Skyo's operations.

"I can't wait to get down there," Anderson said. "No one wants to get down there sooner than me."

While area manufacturers have expressed concerns regarding a shortage of skilled workers here, Anderson said the situation is worse where he's from. "In New York, they've got this attitude that if you work in a machine shop, there must be something wrong with you," he said.

Anderson praised Daytona State College's Advanced Technology College for teaching basic manufacturing skills that companies such as his can expand on.

Ryan Haren, a sales associate at the Madden's Ace Hardware store in Holly Hill, said the Ace brand screwdrivers are popular with customers. He expressed surprise that the maker of those products will be moving here.

"It's nice to have a company that's going to be so close to us," he said.

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