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ATC trucks into South Dallas

Freightliner Group to spend \$15M on second Big D dealership, hire up to 200

By Margaret Allen

As many as 200 new jobs will pour into South Dallas in 2008, when new- and used-truck dealer The Around the Clock Freightliner Group LP locates a new sales and service dealership along busy Interstate 20.

Family-owned ATC, which is housed in Oklahoma City, plans to start construction on a 185,000-square-foot facility, its second in Dallas and third in North Texas, on June 1, said Kirk Hagan, vice president and CFO.

With an investment of upward of \$15 million, the state-of-the-art dealership should open nine to 12 months later, Hagan said.

One key target, especially for servicing: all the 18-wheelers that traverse I-20.

"The volume of trucks on I-20 is so much greater than on I-40," Hagan said. "You only need a small fraction of those to increase your business substantially"

Twenty-four-year-old ATC sells new and used trucks, 99% of them made by Oregon-based Freightliner LLC. In addition to a dealership in Oklahoma City, ATC has a Dallas Freightliner-Western Star dealership at 3040 Irving Blvd; in Dallas, as well as dealerships in Fort Worth and Tulsa, Okla.

The 15-year-old Dallas location accounted for 40% of ATC's \$400 million revenue in 2006, Hagan said. That 90,000-square-foot operation on 11 acres, with 156 employees, will remain open.

The second Dallas dealership, which will be the company's largest, is expected to bring \$300 million in revenue by the end of 2008, said John Miciotto, general manager of Dallas Freightliner Western Star. ATC recorded double-digit growth the past three years, Miciotto said, and that is projected to continue.

ATC's largest expansion ever is being driven by the fact that Dallas has become the distribution hub for the Southwest, Miciotto said. Freightliner LLC also is dominating the truck market, with combined North American market share of more than 35 %, he said.

At the same time ATC has outgrown its existing Dallas center; said Miciotto, who also will manage the new facility.

Operations in South Dallas will include new and used truck sales, parts and service for both local and transient customers, financing, insurance, contract maintenance and classroom training for service technicians.

ATC's southern location will hire up to 200 employees as business ramps up, many of them skilled service technicians. Those jobs pay from \$15 to \$25 an hour or more, Miciotto said. That will mark a job boon for South Dallas, where the economy has only recently pierced to life after decades of lading the larger Metroplex.

Biggest employer

The new ATC dealership will sit on 24 acres in the Dallas SouthPort Center business park at Bonnie

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View Road and 1-20. A general contractor hasn't been selected yet.

"ATC will be the biggest employer in the southern sector announced so far," said David Garner, principal with Garner Commercial Inc., who represented SouthPort.

ATC will be the fifth tenant at SouthPort. The others are Wal-Mart, with a tire distribution center; trailer manufacturer Great Dane LP; anew Dallas Morning News packaging production plant and a Travel Centers of America truck stop.

The 400 acre park off I-20 was established in the mid-1990s, just one mile from biter state 45 and four miles from Interstate 35. It was purchased in August by California based The Allen Group, which is developing the adjacent Dallas Logistics Hub — more than 5,000 acres around the Dallas Intermodal Terminal.

A 360-acre facility for loading and off-loading trains bearing ocean-going containers, the DRR was built by Union Pacific Railroad Co. and opened in 2005. A steady stream of semi-tractor trailer rigs move through the center. BNSF Railway Co. is now studying the possibility of opening an intermodal center in the area as well.

All the trucking activity is a big draw for ATC, Hagan said. To lure customers, ATC's new facility will include air-conditioned and heated 24-hour; 7-

day-week service bays and a parts warehouse, a customer lounge with a big-screen TV and stadium seating, washers and dryers, high-speed Internet access and locker rooms with showers conformed separately for men and women.

"We feel very confident these amenities will aid us in our recruiting efforts, plus provide unquestionable comfort for our customers," Miciotto said.

Garner worked with Rolando Leal, a sale and leasing specialist for Coldwell Banker Commercial, to scout the location for ATC.

Once a city of Dallas economic-development specialist. Garner has been working the real estate market in southern Dallas for 3 years. Leal, who grew up in that area of southern Dallas County was scouting retail locations when he learned ATC needed a site.

Together Garner and Leal looked up and down 1-45 and 1-20 for potential sites. Finally ATC settled on the SouthPort tract, and a deal was hammered out at Travel Center's Burger King, Garner said.

ATC hasn't applied yet for any incentives from the city of Dallas, but hopes to, Hagan said. The company had purchased a 50-acre tract of land a number of years ago on 1-20 near Houston School Road in Lancaster for a possible dealership. That land is now better suited for retail uses. Leal said.