

350,000

Size of new Alstom facility
in square feet

360

Number of Alstom employees
added because of expansion

\$280 million

Investment
in Alstom expansion

Priming the job pump



James Brandon works on a panel at Alstom. The company on Monday announced the creation of 360 jobs that will be housed in a building formerly occupied by Aerisyn. STAFF PHOTO BY GILLIAN BOLSOVER

Nuclear power revival fuels expansion of Alstom plant

EDITOR'S NOTE: For video and audio with this story, go to www.timesfreepress.com.

By MIKE PARE
STAFF WRITER

A riverfront site in Chattanooga that held nearly 6,000 workers three decades ago making nuclear power plant components soon will house workers taking part in a revival of the industry.

Alstom Power will make steam and gas turbines as it seeks to capture business related to nuclear and fossil power

plant construction in the United States, officials said Monday.

The company will add about 360 people to its 600-member work force in the city, and it will inject \$280 million into its Riverfront Parkway facility in new equipment and refitting existing buildings, officials said.

"The demand is high for this equipment," said Guy Chardon, a senior vice president for the company based in Paris.

The plant site, while run by Combustion Engineering in the 1970s, employed about 5,700

people when nuclear power plant construction was in full swing.

In the past five months, federal regulators have received license applications for six nuclear reactors in the United States as the industry anticipates a wave of construction. The Alstom site also will produce turbines for existing nuclear and other power plants, Mr. Chardon said, but it will hold no radioactive materials.

Alstom's facility now focuses on replacement components for

coal-fired power plants. The new division at the facility is to start operations within two to three years in 350,000 square feet of space, Mr. Chardon said.

He said most hiring will be done in the six to nine months before operations start so those workers can be trained, though small numbers of employees will be brought on soon. Company officials declined to discuss wage rates.

Chattanooga Area Cham-

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of the problem an overdramatization."

"It never has been an issue

ago.

"I think our people would like that if given the opportu-

...that eight hours will go by pretty quickly."

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sion, attendees also proposed increasing the cap on taxi permits to 175, with the condition that the new transportation

Expansion

● Continued from Page A1

ber of Commerce officials said wages will be above the average annual salary of \$33,941 in Hamilton County.

Trevor Hamilton, the Chamber's vice president for economic development, said landing the new Alstom division "reinforces our leadership as a hub" in the energy-related sector.

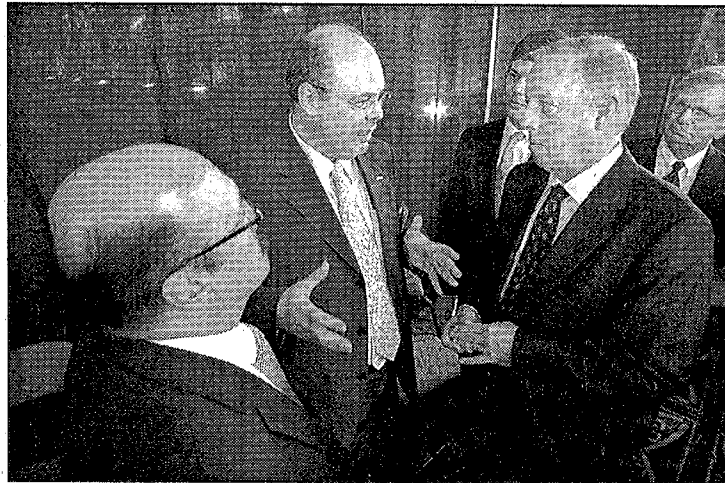
"This is a major milestone for one of our own," he said. "Tennessee can compete in a global scale for manufacturing."

Tennessee Gov. Phil Brede- sen said the jobs and investment will have a ripple effect in the state.

"When I think of France, I will think of wine, cars and turbines," he said.

Matt Kisber, commissioner of the state Department of Economic and Community Development, said Alstom will benefit from policy changes made in a couple of tax incentives offered by the state.

He said Alstom will be eligible for the state's job tax credit



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN RAWLSTON

Guy Chardon, center, senior vice president of the turbo machines group of Alstom, talks Monday with Gov. Phil Brede- sen, right, and Joseph Vasile, Alstom's vice president of global power sales for the United States, after announcing a turbine manufacturing facility to be built in Chattanooga. Officials gathered at the Chattanooga Convention Center.

and its industrial machinery credit.

Officials said an incentive package is not finished, and there was no estimate of how much in tax breaks Alstom could receive.

However, the company could seek a payment in lieu of property tax agreement, and it is expected to receive incentive

money from the Tennessee Valley Authority's Valley Advantage Fund, they said.

Also, Chattanooga Mayor Ron Littlefield said there will be road and traffic signal upgrades near the plant, and he said plans are to build a section of the Tennessee Riverwalk along the river side of the facility.

He said Alstom officials

asked that the area around the plant be given attention.

Hamilton County Mayor Claude Ramsey said Alstom is interested in the work force and how it is trained. That is a key part of Alstom's future, said Mr. Ramsey, adding he has visited Alstom plants in Switzerland, France and China.

Mr. Chardon said an important element that sealed the deal for Chattanooga was transportation infrastructure such as the river.

"Chattanooga is an ideal location," he said.

Mr. Chardon said Alstom can reach 80 percent of nuclear power plants by water from Chattanooga.

Tom Kilgore, TVA's chief executive, said Alstom is a supplier to the utility.

"We look forward to being a future customer of the turbines," he said.

U.S. Rep. Zach Wamp, R-Tenn., said the location of the investment "underscores the importance of Chattanooga and the Tennessee Valley Corridor as a center for energy technologies in the nation."

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