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LOCAL PLANT SAVED, BUY-OUT BRINGS BACK JOBS

Woodhead Plant re-opens after shutdown, saving local jobs.

AIKEN, SC – Graniteville Specialty Fabrics, formerly Avondale Mill’s Woodhead Plant, has reopened, thanks to new ownership and a recent buy-out. The 177,000-square-foot facility shut down all operations July 25, but recently reopened thanks to the purchase, which saved approximately 90 local jobs.

The new owners operating under the name Woodhead, LLC are Weldon Wyatt – a local businessman who owns Sage Valley Golf Club, and other South Carolina businessmen including, Sam Phillips, David Poole, Robert O. Collins and Miles Loadholt.

“Graniteville Specialty Fabrics serves a unique niche in the textile industry,” said Wyatt, part owner of the plant. “This area has a rich history in textiles and we just couldn’t let it lose another plant. There are too many people who depend on Graniteville Specialty Fabrics for their livelihood and too many customers who can’t get these products anywhere else. We knew we had to do something, so we bought it.”

The plant produces five coating ranges designed to finish a wide variety of fabrics for both apparel and industrial uses. Major product lines include awnings, boat covers, outdoor furniture, tents and coated apparel. This year, the plant will produce approximately 15,000,000 yards of finished goods.

Doug Johnson is the plant manager. “It has been a difficult summer for us with the July 25th shut-down. We weren’t sure we were going to have jobs this fall,” said Johnson. “But Mr. Wyatt and his associates saw the potential and the benefits of keeping this plant operational. We make such a unique and diverse product line that takes years to develop. Technology, such as this, is not easily found throughout the United States. We are very pleased to be able to continue servicing our customers as Graniteville Specialty Fabrics.”

Now that the plant is up and running, there are already plans in place for future business and growth with new products, which will result in increased business and more jobs for this site. Plus, there is the hope that other business owners will see the benefit of relocating to the Graniteville area with its available space and skilled workforce. For now, the entire Greater Aiken community is excited to see this historic plant operating again.

For more information about Graniteville Specialty Fabrics, please contact Doug Johnson at 803-663-2350 or Kevin Crean, Vice President of Sales at 803-663-2609.

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