

Wind Tower Firm Comes to Columbus
Columbus Telegram
Posted: Thursday, June 14, 2007 12:00 am

COLUMBUS - Katana Summit LLC - a partnership of Katana Industries Inc. of Ephrata, Wash., and Sumitomo Corporation of Tokyo, Japan - has purchased buildings and land in Columbus to manufacture tubular wind towers.

The company purchased the Columbus Spec Building, Reliance Building and 46 acres from Loup Power District in the Columbus East Industrial Park, and work began at the site June 8, according to a press release.

Columbus-based general contractor BD Construction is doing the work.

Darrell Lehmann, president and CEO of Katana Summit, LLC, said this morning it was a combination of available facilities and additional land, as well as the persuasion of the Columbus Economic Council, that made Columbus attractive as a Midwest expansion site.

There is a wind energy market throughout the Midwest, and both Katana and Sumitomo decided to expand to Columbus," Lehmann said.

He said such a major investment in the newer, larger facility will require his full attention and he has already purchased a local home.

We look forward to having our facility here in Columbus," Lehmann said. We have been well-received to this point and are anxious to get started."

Neal Suess, of the Columbus Economic Council, said communications with Katana were initiated last October and since then representatives from the company have visited the community six times to analyze what Columbus has to offer.

They came in on a preliminary basis and were interested in some things," particularly the Reliance Building and the availability of additional land, Suess said.

Suess said it was a testament to the local can-do attitude and focus on economic development that another global company is building operations in Columbus.

Columbus is a very industrialized community, and this is a new industry with a new type of manufacturing process" for the area, Suess said. This will provide a lot of benefits to the city of Columbus, and it speaks well for our community."

The project will encompass 75 acres and more than 250,000 square foot of building space. Plans call for manufacturing to begin by March of 2008.

The firm plans to employ 100-120 workers in Columbus at full production during 2008. Recruitment of employees will begin in the fall.

Katana Industries operates a windmill tower manufacturing plant at the Port of Ephrata in Grant County, Washington.

According to information from its Web site, Sumitomo is a multifaceted company involved in metal products, transportation, construction, infrastructure, media, chemicals, electronics, mineral resources, energy, real estate and finance.

Motoyuku Oka, Sumitomo president and CEO, said in a statement on the Web site that:

At present, we are actively pursuing an expansion-oriented management approach focused on broadening our business base by increasing profitable assets. We have invested in a well-balanced manner in businesses with high future growth potential, as well as in those which have an immediate effect on earnings. Recent acquisitions of crude oil interests and an overseas power generation business, for example, are making a solid contribution to our earnings.”

Information about the local project was released jointly on Wednesday by Lehmann, Suess, Platte County Supervisor Chairman John Woerth and Mayor Mike Moser.

A groundbreaking ceremony is being planned. For more information on the project, contact Dave Bell at Loup Power District at 564-3171, ext. 257.