

GROWING BAXTER

By Ben Wheeler

After Brazilian ceramics company Portobello America announced Monday its United States headquarters will be heading to Baxter, the small town of about 1,400 is set to grow exponentially.

Putnam County executive Randy Porter said the \$150 million investment from Portobello is the largest in the history of the county and will create a growth in Baxter, as well as Putnam County.



"Historical," Porter said. "We think this is going to be great for Baxter, and it's going to help it grow as we move forward."

(Pictured: After the announcement that Portobello America will build its United States headquarters in Baxter, John Martin,

Baxter mayor, and Cesar Gomes, Portobello board of directors chair, stepped aside to speak about the historic announcement).

Putnam County has gained a variety of foreign companies over the past few years, and Porter believes it says a lot about the community. Monday's announcement brings the total number of jobs coming to Putnam County over the past four years to about 3,500, according to Porter.

Baxter Mayor John Martin said the town has already been approached about future developments. A new 126-home, housing development is being planned near the Portobello headquarters.

With the economic impact of Portobello heading to the small town, Martin expects the facility to create a major growth in the community.

"Double, triple, quadruple," Martin said. "This is a spark to this community, and it takes things like this to help a small community grow."

The new facility will have a minimal impact on the water department of Baxter. The town currently purchases water from Cookeville.

"We looked at it, and it doesn't appear to be like there should be any issue," said Ronnie Kelly, director. "(At this time), there shouldn't be any improvements (needed) that I'm aware of."

The facility is set to create 220 jobs and will be housed at the Tennessee Motor Speedway site. Construction is expected to be complete in 2021.

"We are very pleased, very confident on this project," said Cesar Gomes, president of Portobello America. "The way we are being received, we feel that we are starting a very good partnership."

This is one of a number of ceramic companies in the Upper Cumberland, something Gomes attributes to the raw materials, competitive energy and great people.

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 4 December 2018

BRAZILIAN CERAMICS COMPANY COMING

By Ben Wheeler & Lindsay McReynolds:

A Brazilian ceramics company is expected to bring 220 jobs to Baxter.

Portobello SA's plans to build its U.S. headquarters as well as its first U.S. production facility were announced Monday morning at DelMonaco Winery with public officials



including Tennessee Department of Economic Development Commissioner Bob Rolfe and Cesar Gomes, chair of the board of directors for Portobello America.

(Pictured: Cesar Gomes, chair of the board of directors for Portobello America, announces the Brazilian company's plans to build its first U.S. production facility in Baxter).

Portobello is expected to build its first U.S. operation on the Tennessee Motor Speedway site in Putnam County by 2021.

“Portobello’s decision to locate its new production facility and U.S. headquarters and create more than 200 jobs in Baxter will be transformational for the community,” Gov. Bill Haslam said. “In Tennessee, we have created a business-friendly environment that promotes growth in all of our communities across the state and I appreciate Portobello for seeing what great assets Tennessee and Putnam County have to offer. I look forward to seeing this company succeed in our state and with investments like this, Tennessee will lead in the creation of high-quality jobs.”

Cesar Gomes, chair of the board of directors for Portobello American, said, “I appreciate Brazil-based Portobello for selecting Tennessee as the home of its first U.S. production facility and its new U.S. headquarters.

"Tennessee places a major emphasis on foreign direct investment and Brazilian companies have been a great investment partners in Tennessee," Gomes continued. "There are 13 Brazilian companies currently located in our state, employing approximately 2,000 Tennesseans. I thank Portobello for making this major announcement in Baxter and for creating 220 new high quality, family-wage jobs in Putnam County."

The Industrial Development Board Friday approved a Payment in Lieu of Taxes of PILOT plan for Portobello, which was previously known as Project Sim. The PILOT offer includes 10 years of tax abatement and five years at 50 percent. Personal property will be abated for five years, and starting in the sixth year, the company would pay 50 percent. In the seventh year, the company would begin paying 60 percent.

Putnam County Mayor Randy Porter said, "Portobello represents the largest capital investment for a manufacturing project in our county's history, and we thank them for becoming our newest economic development partner. I'm proud of all the work that went into getting us to this point and our team is ready to continue working with Portobello for many years to come."

Baxter Mayor John Martin said, "I want to thank Portobello for committing to the future of Baxter. We have been dedicated to growing our city for a long time and I'm so proud that we're seeing the fruits of the work that we've put in. We look forward to a long partnership that will create tremendous economic impact for our citizens."

Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN: 3 December 2018

*Read more about the city of Baxter, Putnam Co., TN at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>