

Dayton Phoenix Group gears up

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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Locomotive remanufacturer close to winning railroad contract.

Trucks have been spotted rolling up to loading entrances at the Dayton Phoenix Group facility in Gothenburg's industrial tract.

Cars have been coming and going from the parking lot.

Occasionally, a passerby will stop and enter the 50,000 square-foot building that has been dormant for months to ask manager Carl Skiles what's going on.

"We're cautiously optimistic that we'll get a contract to repair rotating locomotive equipment from a major North American Railroad," Skiles said.

Skiles is also hoping to boost employee numbers from three to around 30.

Just when the locomotive equipment remanufacturing plant will be humming with activity depends on the time it takes to train employees and what bid specifications are if Dayton-Phoenix wins the contract, he said.

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Dayton Phoenix was founded in 1939 to supply electrical and locomotive components for railroad markets.

The Gothenburg plant, which used to house Hipp Wholesale Foods, Inc., was equipped with state-of-the-art equipment in the spring of 2009 but lost a contract with Burlington Northern Sante Fe Railroad.

Last February, Skiles relocated to Gothenburg from a Dayton Phoenix facility in Houston, TX, where he managed the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) locomotive repair business.

Since then, he has been training employees Brent DeBoer of Gothenburg and Thad Ackerman of Cozad to repair locomotive fans and electric motors for Electro-motive Division which sells supplies to railroads worldwide.

Right now, Skiles said the railroad remanufacturing business is mixed.

Because Dayton Phoenix services railroad equipment, he said the effects of the economy on railroads also affect his company.

“If they park their trains, our business decreases and if they ship and use our equipment, business increases because they buy more of it,” he explained.

Dayton Phoenix is privately owned by Gale Kooken and John Murphy who are at company headquarters in Dayton, OH.

Locomotive equipment is manufactured at the Dayton plant while repairs to rotating equipment and electric locomotive motors are

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