

Logistics company opening shop locally

Diana R. Fuentes Del Rio News-Herald

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Menlo Worldwide Logistics is opening border operations in Del Rio next month, with plans to hire up to 100 employees within a year.

"This is a feather in our cap for sure," said City Manager Robert Eads. "We facilitated site visits and provided city services to help bring them to Del Rio."

Menlo will be providing services for a major international company that manufactures auto parts in several plants in the state of Coahuila, including Ciudad Acuña, Coah., Mex.



"What we do is receive all the raw materials from the United States, Canada and elsewhere in Del Rio and ship the materials across the border, and then do the reverse once the product is ready. The product comes back across the border, and we receive, store and ship the product to their end customers," explained Terry Wagner, director of operations for Menlo Worldwide Logistics.

Previously, the manufacturer had a contract with Penske Logistics to provide similar supply-chain services out of Laredo, according to the Laredo Morning Times. The newspaper reported that the warehouse operation employed about 25 people and would be closing at the end of July.

Wagner said that in Del Rio, Menlo also will be working with another company that provides returnable containers to ship the goods manufactured in Acuña and elsewhere in Mexico.

"Once those get used, we get them back and clean them and get them ready to be used again," Wagner explained.

While the Menlo operations are located in the county, at the Del Rio Industrial Park on Cienegas Road, Wagner said the company worked primarily with the city to secure the new business.

"We selected Del Rio based on several factors: proximity to plants across the border; there was already a set pool of qualified resources in the area; and, obviously, cost due to the economic environment," Wagner said.

"The last piece is local government that has been willing to work with us," he added. "There was building-related work and tax incentives that helped us pick Del Rio over anywhere else."

City officials were pleased with the coup, noting the company also had looked at El Paso as an option but chose Del Rio. In addition to the jobs, many of which already have been filled by locals, the city stands to gain other benefits.

"Even though they're going to be in the county, money is going to be spent in the city," Eads noted.

Among the building-related work the city provided was checking flow test records from nearby hydrants in mid-February to assess water pressure in the area.

"We determined there's enough water pressure to support the sprinkler system they need for their facility," said Jackie Robinson, the city's marketing and public communications director. "That's what they wanted to know."

The facility is already bustling with activity as it undergoes renovation and gets ready to open next month.

Initially, Menlo will be hiring 60-70 people, with the possibility of increasing that to 100 in the first year, officials said. Many of those people already have been hired, Wagner said. Some were hired on a temporary basis through a personnel services firm in Uvalde, but could become permanent.

According to its website, Menlo Worldwide Logistics, which was founded in 1990, has more than 100 facilities in 18 countries in North America, Asia, Europe, South America and Australia. The company has nearly 5,000 full-time employees worldwide.