

GE Partners with NY State to Create Next-Generation Batteries



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Editor's Note: This is commendable on many levels, kudos to GE and NY. We need to do lots more of this on a national scale. If you know of any projects in your area, let us know.

Niskayuna, N.Y. – May 12, 2009 – GE (NYSE: GE) announced today that it will open a new, state-of-the-art battery manufacturing plant in Upstate New York that will serve as the main manufacturing facility for GE’s newly formed battery business. The initial investment in the factory will be \$100 million. It will be located in the Capital Region and will create 350 new manufacturing jobs at GE and thousands more in the supply chain. The announcement coincides with GE’s submission this week for federal stimulus dollars from the U.S. Department of Energy.

GE has invested more than \$150 million to develop advanced battery technologies, including a high energy density, sodium-based chemistry battery that will provide energy storage for several future product applications. The first application will be GE’s hybrid locomotive, which will be commercialized in 2010. In addition, GE has launch customers in several industries, including mining, telecommunications and utility, with key applications for heavy service

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vehicles, backup storage and load leveling for the smart grid.

This investment in sodium battery technology complements GE's investment in A123, a leading supplier of lithium batteries for plug-in electric passenger cars. With these two technologies, GE now leads the world in applications for high power and high energy density storage systems.

GE selected New York for the manufacturing plant because of strong support from New York state officials, specifically Governor David Paterson and Dennis Mullen, President of the Upstate Empire State Development Corporation. Also playing an important role in the planning of the new facility was U.S. Representative Paul Tonko, who helped to assemble the New York delegation in supporting the GE project.

"This type of public-private partnership is essential to rebuild America's manufacturing base, create new jobs and to accelerate the pace at which new technology comes to market," said Jeff Immelt, Chairman and CEO of GE. "We believe the advanced battery business could be a \$1 billion business over the next decade. As GE launches this technology business, I want to thank Governor Paterson and his economic development team for their assistance in facilitating the agreement that made the selection of New York an easy decision."

The new factory also will have the advantage of being in close proximity to GE Global Research in Niskayuna, where advances to the battery chemistry were developed. The batteries, which are a critical piece of energy storage systems,

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will rely heavily on new materials, new manufacturing technologies and intelligent controls.

Governor Paterson said, "We are making New York the global capital of the new clean energy economy. That commitment is part of the reason GE is interested in expanding its operations to begin producing high-tech batteries here; evidence that our strategy translates to real jobs for real New Yorkers. This is exactly the kind of project Congress envisioned when they developed this component of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and I urge the U.S. Department of Energy to approve this important project for New York State."

GE's planned facility will employ a high wage "green collar" workforce that will produce approximately 10 million cells each year when the facility is at full capacity. That translates to 900 megawatt hours of energy storage, or enough energy storage to power 1,000 U.S. homes for a month or enough energy to support 1,000 GE hybrid locomotives.

U.S. Rep. Paul Tonko said, "Job expansion, especially in the manufacturing sector, provides the underpinnings for growth and opportunity in the Capital Region as one of the leading energy corridors in the world. GE's planned facility is representative of the types of high-tech manufacturing operations that will create stable jobs and result in additional positive financial impact with suppliers, contract partners and other local businesses. This project is also a sound example of how our government can work hand-in-hand with private companies to pursue new technologies and renew and revitalize our communities, particularly in Upstate New York."

The new battery business will be a part of GE Transportation and will serve customers in the rail, marine, mining, telecommunications and utility sectors. As the leading producer of diesel-electric locomotives, GE has a rich history of delivering breakthrough technologies that are today commonplace in the rail industry. This battery technology will allow GE to be the first manufacturer to introduce a hybrid, heavy-haul freight locomotive that reduces emissions while improving fuel efficiency, putting GE well ahead of its competition.

Matthew K. Rose, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corporation, one of the world's leading railroads, said, "Hybrid locomotives, and the battery technology on board, could be an important part of how we ship goods by rail in the future. The ability to produce a battery pack designed for rail applications is a significant milestone to producing a commercially available hybrid locomotive that will further enhance rail's reputation as the most environmentally sound mode for moving freight in America."

In addition to the support received by Congressman Tonko, GE's application for federal stimulus money has received endorsements from the rest of the New York delegation, including Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand as well as Congressman Scott Murphy.

Senator Schumer said, "Given the tough economic environment, today's announcement is welcome news as we try to grow the manufacturing base in New York. This project is yet another indication that the Capital Region is on the cutting edge of alternative energy development, and the jobs that it will

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create will give the region a much needed shot in the arm.”

Senator Gillibrand said, “The entire New York Congressional Delegation is supportive of GE’s planned facility. Now that state funding is secure, we must work over the coming weeks to ensure that this project will move forward so that construction and battery production can begin as soon as possible.”

U.S. Rep. Murphy said, “GE’s plans to locate a new, battery manufacturing facility in the Capital Region truly are an investment in Upstate New York’s future. This is exactly the kind of project that will help reinvigorate Upstate’s manufacturing job base, and I am proud to support GE’s planned facility.”

GE hopes to secure additional federal funding for the new facility later this summer. Applications for Department of Energy funding are due next week. The goal is to have the new manufacturing operation producing batteries by mid-2011.

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