

Nutrition firm Herbalife to hire 500 at NC plant

The Associated Press

Nutrition and weight-loss supplement-maker Herbalife said Wednesday it will revamp a defunct Dell Inc. computer manufacturing plant in North Carolina for an East Coast production center that will employ about 500 in three years.

Los Angeles-based Herbalife will invest about \$130 million to buy and equip the 750,000-square-foot Dell plant near Winston-Salem that closed two years ago, company officials and Gov. Beverly Perdue's office said. Herbalife also was reported to be considering a site near Atlanta.

Herbalife will get \$1 million up-front from North Carolina taxpayers, and up to \$5.5 million more in state tax breaks if the company meets its targets and sustains them for 11 years. The company also could collect \$3.4 million in local incentives.

The jobs will pay an average wage of \$40,193, below the Forsyth County average of \$42,588, state officials said.

Herbalife sells weight management, nutritional and personal-care products exclusively through independent distributors. The company's profit grew 9 percent in the third quarter ending Sept. 30 to \$117.8 million as sales increased to \$1 billion for the period.

Dell was offered more than \$300 million in incentives in 2004 to choose the North Carolina site for its computer assembly plant. Most state incentives were never paid, and Dell repaid local governments \$26 million in upfront incentives.

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