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BlackHawk Industrial Distribution joins state Quality Jobs Program

BY ROD WALTON World Staff Writer
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BROKEN ARROW - BlackHawk Industrial Distribution Inc. started 26 months ago with only one employee but has grown organically and through acquisitions to employ 500 people nationwide and 30 locally, its founder said Tuesday.

The company has entered the Oklahoma Quality Jobs Program to benefit from payroll tax rebates if it follows through with hiring plans. BlackHawk is eligible for up to \$3.4 million worth of incentives if it adds as many as 168 employees over the next few years.

"We're going to grow through acquisitions," founder Bill Scheller said. "And we'll continue to build out our Oklahoma presence."

BlackHawk recently moved its "base camp," or administrative and sales headquarters, to the former SkyCam building at 1501 W. Southwest Expressway Drive in Broken Arrow. Scheller said he expects to add at least 125 people statewide in coming years and diversify all across the country.

The company's distribution business is focused on cutting tools and abrasives for the aerospace, energy, medical and construction industries. BlackHawk has 17 distribution locations nationwide, including Oklahoma City, Omaha, Neb., Denver, Milwaukee, Arkansas and Texas.

Acquisitions have included Kendeco Tool Crib, Tool Service Corp., Sanders Tool Supply, Fuchs Machinery and Rogers Industrial Supply.

"We're taking smaller businesses and creating scale from that," Scheller said. "We've built a full HR (human resource) staff here to service the country."

Brazos Private Equity Partners is backing Scheller and BlackHawk. The partners started their plan with BlackHawk's acquisition of Duncan Industrial Solutions Inc. in October 2010.

Another state Quality Jobs enrollee is Equipment Technology LLC, an Oklahoma City-based maker of aerial lifts and utility truck bodies. It stands to gain up to \$3.17 million in payroll tax rebates if it expands by 200 employees.

The Quality Jobs pays up to 5 percent of taxable payroll for eligible companies that increase their workforce. They must maintain the workforce and a \$2.5 million taxable payroll for four consecutive quarters during the first three years under the program.

Quality Jobs enrollees also must offer basic health insurance coverage to all employees, while 80 percent of those must work at least 30 hours per week.

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Associated Images:



Bill Scheller: "We're going to grow through acquisitions. ...And we'll continue to build out our Oklahoma presence."

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