

Two energy companies join Quality Jobs Program

by D. Ray Tuttle

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Robert Lane, a hydraulic assembler, applies lubricant to a lube tank at the Serva Group facility at the Tulsa Port of Catoosa. (D. Ray Tuttle)

CATOOSA – Oil-field equipment manufacturer Serva Group, in response to increased sales, will add 148 jobs at its Port of Catoosa and Duncan facilities over the next three years, said Grant DeFehr, Serva Group president.

Oklahoma City-based Serva Group was accepted into the Oklahoma Quality Jobs Program in August. The company joins another energy company with Tulsa offices, Dover Fluid Management. Dover, which makes sucker rods for the oil field, will be adding 100 jobs over a five-year period.

The Oklahoma Quality Jobs Program allows qualifying businesses creating jobs to receive an incentive to locate or expand in Oklahoma, said the state Department of Commerce in a statement.

Administered by Oklahoma Commerce, the program provides quarterly cash payments of up to 5 percent of new taxable payroll directly to a qualifying company for up to 10 years. Serva will receive \$2.8 million in benefits. Dover will receive \$2 million in benefits, according to the state Commerce Department.

“We are adding jobs consistently,” DeFehr said.

DeFehr expects that the company will add the jobs within the next three years and will grow at both the Duncan and port sites.

Serva Group added a second shift at the Port of Catoosa.

“Tulsa has a variety of jobs being added but the majority will be engineering, software and mechanical design, purchasing, customer support and field support roles,” DeFehr said. “With the two shifts, we hope to begin producing 100 pieces of equipment out of Tulsa sometime in next year.”

At Duncan, Serva employees assemble electric hydraulic equipment among other pieces of oil-field equipment.

The company suffered through a slack time the past few years as companies stopped ordering new equipment beginning around 2005.

“Typically in the oil patch there are cycles that occur,” DeFehr said. “That happened when companies did not upgrade their equipment. At the same time we did not invest a lot in that time period because demand for equipment was down as our customers were not upgrading nor replacing their fleet.”

Energy companies tend to begin placing orders toward the end of the calendar year and Serva is experiencing that demand, he said.

“People are placing orders for 2012,” DeFehr said.

Just a few years ago Tulsa had a small footprint with about 12 employees while Duncan had 33 workers. Today, Duncan has expanded to nearly 70 full-time workers while the port facility has nearly 100, DeFehr said.

Dover did not return calls seeking comment.

Since it was created in July 1993, the Quality Jobs Program has issued more than 612 contracts to locating, expanding and startup businesses in the state.

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