

## eBay to add 191 jobs

### As it expands Henry County operations

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By TIM COX - Bulletin Staff Writer

eBay Enterprise will expand its operations in Henry County, adding 191 full-time jobs with an annual payroll of more than \$4 million and investing \$5.8 million in capital improvements, officials announced Thursday.

The expansion will make eBay the second-largest non-service employer in the region after Eastman Chemical Co., according to Mark Heath, president and CEO of the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corp.

The company will move into a 400,000-square-foot facility on Joseph Martin Highway in Ridgeway, where it already has some operations. It will make improvements to the building — the work already has begun — and also put in materials-handling equipment, said Kim Smith-Glisson, the company's director of operations for the region.

The new facility will receive merchandise from client businesses, fulfill orders and ship them. It will serve client businesses including Bath & Body Works, Stein Mart and The Company Store, according to a news release.

The new facility is expected to be up and running by mid-July, Smith-Glisson said. The company already has begun recruiting for a manager and four supervisors, she added.

eBay will receive a \$710,000 grant from the Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission to help with the cost of the expansion. It also will benefit from tax rebates under the county's Enterprise Zone program. It will get a rebate of 100 percent of taxes paid to the county in the first year and 50 percent in the following four years. eBay also will receive state assistance through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program.

"We're here to celebrate," County Administrator Tim Hall said at the start of a joint meeting of the Henry County Board of Supervisors and the county's Industrial Development Authority to approve a performance agreement with eBay. Both panels voted unanimously to approve the agreement, which requires eBay to meet employment and capital investment goals within three years as a condition for receiving the grant.

"We very much appreciate" the support of Martinsville and Henry County, Smith-Glisson told the panels. "It's a great win for us."

The expansion will bring eBay's combined presence in the area to 1.3 million square feet and just under 500 full-time employees, according to Smith-Glisson. eBay also has operations in the Bowles Industrial Park near Patrick Henry Community College.

"They are growing just as fast as we can find a place for them to go," Hall said at the joint meeting.

The company is expanding because it "needs more capacity," said Smith-Glisson. eBay elected to expand in Henry County for a combination of reasons, she said. They include a "very supportive" region, "positive labor market" and a "very, very good partnership" with Martinsville and Henry County.

H.G. Vaughn, chairman of the board of supervisors, called it "another great day for our community" in announcing the expansion at a news conference at the County Administration Building. He congratulated the company on its expansion and praised the region's workforce, the tobacco commission, state officials and others for their various roles in the business expansion. "Economic development is a team effort," Vaughn said.

Del. Danny Marshall, R-Danville, a member of the tobacco commission, joined with Vaughn in presenting a ceremonial check for the grant to Smith-Glisson.

The company will announce plans for a job fair in a few weeks at Patrick Henry Community College to begin recruiting workers, she said.

Smith-Glisson declined to say what hourly wage workers would earn. However, based on the projected payroll and the number of workers, an employee's earnings would average about \$21,000 annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week and working 52 weeks a year, hourly wages would be roughly in the range of \$9-10.

The payroll will have a substantial ripple effect on the region's economy, according to Heath. Economists conservatively figure a multiplier of seven for every \$1 of payroll, he indicated, meaning the expansion would have an impact of about \$28 million. That figure represents spending by eBay employees on various goods and services, such as groceries, housing, utilities and more.

"This will be a huge boost" to the region's retailers, said Heath.

eBay provides integrated services to help client companies do business with consumers via the Internet, including order management and fulfillment. The company, which established operations in Henry County in 1999, has other fulfillment and distribution facilities in Nevada, Kentucky and Canada. With the local expansion, its Henry County operations will be second — in terms of both square footage and employees — behind its presence in Kentucky.

"Our ability to expand is possible because of the community's dedication to foster employment growth, and the talented workforce which has allowed us to grow our business and deliver industry-leading services for our clients," Tom Barone, eBay Enterprise vice president of operations, said in a company statement.



Del. Danny Marshall (left) and H.G. Vaughn (right), chairman of the Henry County Board of Supervisors, on Thursday presented a ceremonial check from the state tobacco commission for \$710,000 to Kim Smith-Glisson, director of operations for this region for eBay Enterprise.