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American Packaging expansion adding jobs

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STORY CITY — A \$16.5 million expansion project at American Packaging Corp. in Story City will bring 30 new jobs to Story County in 2010.

The expansion, announced this fall, will add 20,000 square feet to the Story City building facility, as well as additional printing equipment and upgrades “to insure we continue to effectively compete as a low-cost manufacturer of flexible packaging,” CEO and President Peter B. Schottland said in a release announcing the expansion to customers.

American Packaging representatives expect the expansion to be complete in 2010. Daren Westercamp, human resource manager, said hiring began in October, and “will continue at a controlled pace through the first quarter of 2010.”

Westercamp said the jobs ranged from entry-level manufacturing positions to press operator positions requiring several years of experience and training.

The company partnered with Story City to apply for economic development grants from the state, garnering \$200,000 and additional tax breaks from the Iowa Economic Development Board in October.

Mark Jackson, city manager for Story City, said the city helped prepare the applications, and the grant goes toward the creation of new jobs in the area.

“Any job creation in this economy is a wonderful thing,” Jackson said.

American Packaging Corp. specializes in flexible packaging for food, health care, and lawn and garden products, and employs 125 people at its Story City location. The company has locations in Rochester, N.Y., and Columbus, Wis.

After last year saw the departure of hundreds of jobs from the area when the Pella plant closed, State Sen. Rich Olive, D-Story City, said he is encouraged by any job gains.

“We still have companies struggling not only in our area but across the state,” Olive said. “We hope we have seen the bottom. APC is a bright spot right now.

“Any time we can help existing businesses expand and add jobs, many times this is better than recruiting new companies.”

