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Union County facility step closer after bill clears House

Kelli Gavant, Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON -- A Union County robotics training facility is one step closer to becoming a reality after Thursday's passage of a House bill providing \$100,000 for aid in its construction.

The Upstate Regional Robotics Training Center in Union will help train workers to support LSP, Inc., a sheet metal stamper and BMW supplier, which recently announced plans to build a plant in Union.

Rep. Bob Inglis, R-S.C., inserted the measure in a House commerce and science appropriations bill. A similar version would have to pass in the Senate for the project to be funded.

"This robotics center is connected with the very first BMW supplier in Union County, which deserves a huge exclamation point," Inglis said. "I'm very excited about Union having its first BMW supplier. We have a number located in Spartanburg and Greenville. It's a fabulous development for Union, which has double-digit unemployment."

University of South Carolina Union and Spartanburg Technical College will jointly manage the facility after it is built. USC Union will be responsible for the core curriculum, and Spartanburg Tech will oversee the technical aspects.

"These types of opportunities are unbelievably beneficial to us," said Torance Inman, director of the Union County Chamber of Commerce. "As a result of the departure of textile manufacturers, which made us a distressed county, one of our objectives has been for a number of years to bring those kinds of jobs here that would have a higher degree of technology."

Union County has one of the highest levels of unemployment in the state.

"This could bring Union County into the robotics age," Inglis said. "This is a high-tech kind of enterprise that will provide jobs for the future in Union."

City of Union Mayor Bruce Morgan said not only will the center create jobs, but with "the closures in the textile industry, it's a way of retraining those workers."



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