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## The 5 Best Cities for Growing Your Manufacturing Business

Many CEOs are in the midst of decisions right now about where to site or expand a factory. Here are 5 locations that are catching their attention as U.S. manufacturing hotbeds, either traditional-and-growing or up-and-coming.

Posted by: Dale Buss February 4, 2015

- Reno, Nevada.** Now that it has won over the Tesla-Panasonic electric-car-battery "gigafactory" from Elon Musk, the city is pivoting to leverage the most from its achievement in other economic development. That means it's looking for other manufacturers to validate the ascension of the Reno area, and the state as a whole, beyond only gambling and mining industries. Experts say the Tesla complex won't spawn a lot of Tier One suppliers in the area like a conventional auto-assembly plant might do, but surely other companies will be looking to tap into the expanding infrastructure in the area and the rising skill base of Reno-area employees.
- Chattanooga, Tennessee.** The city got a boost when Volkswagen located its new U.S. assembly plant there in 2011. And while sales of the vehicles built there, the Passat sedan, have slowed lately, Chattanooga will get another bump when VW adds to its complex there to build a new SUV next year. Just as important for the long run is that Chattanooga now is benefiting from the high-speed Internet network that Google installed there four years ago, one of four initial cities for such an installation. Manufacturers are sure to follow the digital-tech entrepreneurs and take advantage of the sizzingly fast data network.
- Detroit.** One of the oldest names in American manufacturing has become one of the newest names: the Motor City. Thanks to booming sales since their return from the Great Recession and government bailouts of two of them, the Detroit Three have been sinking resources back into hometown manufacturing, with each of them substantially beefing up important major factory complexes, including those that make the Ford F-150 aluminum-bodied truck and the all-new Chrysler 200 sedan. And key suppliers in the area are burgeoning as well.
- "Any City," South Carolina.** Throw a dart at South Carolina these days and it's likely to hit on or near a hot manufacturing-growth city: Columbia, Greenville, Summerville and, especially, Charleston and Spartanburg. Boeing, for instance, has committed to spend \$1 billion in adding 2,000 jobs by 2020 at its rising "aerospace hub" in the Charleston area, which should lead to siting interest by more aerospace suppliers. And BMW is in the midst of spending its own \$1 billion to boost output at its Spartanburg plant by 50 percent, making models for the hot luxury-SUV market.
- Milwaukee.** The hard-working belt buckle of Wisconsin makes just about everybody's list of rising manufacturing towns. Its manufacturing history includes leather, beer and machine tools. But nowadays, the increasingly diversified factory base of southeastern Wisconsin relies on Harley-Davidson, Master Lock, Badger Meter water meters, General Electric medical-imaging equipment, West Bend kitchen appliances, Johnsonville sausages, Kohler sinks and a variety of other types of goods. A planned water-technology research hub will no doubt further diversify things.

"BMW and Boeing are each spending \$1 billion to build state-of-the-art manufacturing plants in South Carolina."

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