

Electric truck assembly plant to operate in Port Morris

BY PATRICK ROCCHIO

Manufacturing of green, electric trucks is coming to the borough, with Smith Electric announcing that a new assembly plant will soon open in Port Morris.

Spurred on by tax incentives for fleet owners and successful implementation of electric vehicles in fleets, Smith Electric Vehicles, which builds zero-emission, all-electric vehicles has announced that it's opening a new 90,000-square-foot manufacturing facility at 295 Locust Avenue. Approximately 100 jobs with an average salary of \$45,000 per year will be created, said Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. at a press conference at borough hall on Tuesday, November 15.

"Creating over 100 new jobs in the south Bronx is a victory for the local community and clear sign that New York is rapidly attracting innovative opportunities to grow our economy," said Governor Andrew Cuomo.

At the announcement were Diaz; Bryan Hansel, CEO of Smith Electric Vehicles; Ken Adams, president and CEO of the Empire State Development Corporation; New York City economic development corporation president Seth Pinsky; transportation committee chairman Councilman Jimmy Vacca; Marlene Cintron of BOEDC; and Joseph Simone, president of Simone Development which is leasing the facility to the Kansas City, Missouri-based manufacturing

company, among others.

There are a total of \$3.4 million in Excelsior tax credit benefits from the Empire State Development Corporation and \$1.7 million in tax exemptions that approved by the New York City Industrial Development Agency that are being provided to supplement Smith Electric's private investment, according to the governor's office.

Diaz said Hansel had courage for choosing to invest, that this is part of a master plan that has Diaz calling for the creation of green jobs.

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"This project is a win-win for the Bronx and the entire state, and continues to show not only our commitment to bringing new jobs to the Bronx but to growing the green economy here in our borough," Diaz said. "Smith Electric will not only bring more than 100 new jobs to the Bronx, they will manufacture a 'green' product that will reduce emissions in our city and contribute to a greater quality of life not only for borough residents, but for people all over the region."

The Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation played a role in bringing Smith Electric to the borough, as did other agencies like the New York City Industrial Development Agency, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, the

New York Power Authority, and the Department of Labor, Diaz said.

"Smith is excited to expand our U.S. operation into New York," Hansel said. "Governor Cuomo's leadership, combined with the close collaboration amongst state, city, and local authorities has underscored our confidence in the New York business environment and allowed us to expand our commitment to building a sustainable and profitable commercial EV industry."

During the ceremony, Hansel gave a special "shout-out" to Down East Seafood owner Ed Taylor for being a visionary who purchased the first Smith vehicle to operate in the borough.

The company is planning to renovate the former Murray Feiss building on Locust Avenue, and beginning in 2012, manufacture the Smith Newton, which according to the company has a payload of more than 16,000 pounds.

Simone Development is happy to help bring the company, which could have located anywhere in the country, to the borough, Simone said.

"Not only will this facility create new jobs, it was also produce clean energy vehicles to improve our environment," Simone said. "This announcement is yet another example of the remarkable economic renaissance now underway in the Bronx."





Photo courtesy of Simone Development

Smith Electric's assembly facility will occupy a 90,000-square-foot building in Port Morris, owned by Simone Development, that used to be home to Murray Feiss.