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Yacht builder to add 350 jobs in NC in 5 years

By EMERY P. DALESIO AP Business Writer

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RALEIGH, N.C.—A luxury yacht builder said Tuesday that it will consolidate two underused manufacturing plants, closing one in California and adding about 350 jobs in North Carolina within five years.

Lake Forest, Ill.-based Brunswick Corp. said Tuesday it will close its Cabo Yachts plant in Adelanto, Calif., by the end of 2010. Production will move to its Hatteras Yachts factory in New Bern, where 280 workers remain after several rounds of layoffs slashed the workforce from 1,400.

The company could receive up to \$3.1 million in refunds on its North Carolina taxes if it hires the workers and keeps them for 12 years.

Hatteras Yachts range from 50 to 100 feet, while Cabo sportsfishing boats are in the 32- to 52-foot range.

"These decisions are never easy," Hatteras President James Meyer said in a statement, "but are required by business realities."

Many manufacturing workers and some managers will be offered jobs and relocation help to move to North Carolina, Meyer said.

Cabo and Hatteras already shared product design, engineering, marketing and sales services in New Bern, Meyer said. The move also brought production of Cabo vessels closer to the majority of the company's markets, trimming delivery time while allowing some deliveries via waterways, something that was not possible from the Southern California factory, Meyer said.

The move means the New Bern plant is ramping up employment again after sharp layoffs in the past

two years.

Brunswick cut 330 workers in New Bern nearly 18 months ago after shedding about the same number in August 2008 at factories in New Bern and Edenton.

The new jobs in New Bern are expected to average \$31,425 a year plus benefits, but the company can keep its state incentives as long as wages average \$28,283. The Craven County average salary is \$29,848 a year.

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