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Ethan Allen brings 90 jobs to McDowell County

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RALEIGH — Gov. Bev Perdue today announced that Ethan Allen Operations Inc., a manufacturer of Ethan Allen Interiors, will expand in Old Fort. The company plans to create 90 jobs and invest \$250,000 to expand its production capacity. The project was made possible in part by a \$270,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund.

“In addition to bringing jobs and investment to Western North Carolina, Ethan Allen’s decision to expand in McDowell County speaks volumes about our strong workforce and business climate,” said Gov. Perdue. “North Carolina’s support for the furniture industry is recognized worldwide.”

Ethan Allen, established in 1932, is an American brand with global reach, manufacturing about 70 percent of its products in seven North American plants. The company’s Old Fort plant manufactures high quality, solid wood case goods furniture such as dining and bedrooms sets for its North American and international design centers. The company also manufactures upholstery furniture in Maiden and has about 1,300 employees in North Carolina.

“The recession of the past year has resulted in many challenges and also created opportunities to accelerate establishing a stronger enterprise,” said Ethan Allen Chairman and CEO Farooq Kathwari. “Our plan to expand case goods operations in Old Fort, where we have been operating since 1959, will start immediately. We are pleased that the state and local government authorities in North Carolina worked with us to make this happen.”

Although individual wages will vary by job type, the jobs will pay an average wage of \$26,645 not including benefits. The McDowell County average annual wage is \$27,768.

The One NC Fund provides financial assistance, through local governments, to attract business projects that will stimulate economic activity and create new jobs in the state. Companies receive no money up front and must meet job creation and investment performance standards to qualify for grant funds. These grants also require and are contingent on local matches.

Through use of the One NC Fund, more than 40,000 jobs and \$7 billion in investment have been created since 2001. Other partners that helped with the project include: the N.C. Department of Commerce, N.C. Community College Systems and McDowell County.

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