

<http://www.redding.com/news/2007/oct/27/vent-maker-to-grow/>

Vent maker to grow

Captive-Aire buys nearby building; production to start up in January

By David Benda
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Photo by Andreas Fuhrmann / Record Searchlight

NEW ROOM TO GROW: Captive-Aire's manufacturing plant on Lockheed Drive in Redding is pressed to capacity, so the North Carolina company purchased a nearby building on Thunderbird Drive for expansion. The kitchen-vent manufacturer hopes to be operating inside the new building by January.

Kitchen-vent manufacturer Captive-Aire is spending nearly \$2 million to expand its operation in Redding.

The North Carolina company, which opened in Redding a little more than a year ago, paid \$1.7 million this week for a vacant building on Thunderbird Drive.

The 23,000-square-foot building, which had been owned by Salt Creek Holding Co./Cross Petroleum, is next to Captive-Aire's main plant on Lockheed Drive, across the road from Redding Municipal Airport.

Salt Creek Holding/Cross Petroleum purchased the Thunderbird Drive site in October 2005 from Webb Morrow for \$1.3 million, Shasta County property records show.

Plant Manager Csaba Sikur expects to be up and running in the new building in January. He wouldn't say what Captive-Aire will be manufacturing in the Thunderbird Drive facility.

"I am 95 percent certain, but I don't want to say in case something changes," Sikur said Friday. He also wouldn't say how many new employees the company will hire to staff the new facility.

Captive-Aire's growth in Redding has been steady.

Since its opening, the company has nearly tripled its work force to 80 employees. Production-line workers start at \$9 an hour with no skills and \$10 an hour with experience.

Captive-Aire is the nation's largest manufacturer of kitchen-ventilation systems. The company, which was established in 1976, expects to generate \$200 million in sales this year, up from \$150 million two years ago. The company also has manufacturing plants in Youngsville, N.C.; Muskogee, Okla.; and West Union, Iowa, and 55 sales offices.

In Redding, Captive-Air is based inside the former Redding French Bakery building, which it bought for \$2.15 million in cash in May 2006.

"Overall, Captive-Aire is doing well around the country, with double-digit growth the past four years," president and founder Robert Luddy said Friday by phone from the company's Raleigh, N.C., headquarters. "Redding has done extremely well because it's our first plant we have had on the West Coast, so it's serving all of eight and a good part of 11 Western states."

Commercial agent Mike Papillo of North Country Properties in Palo Cedro said the Thunderbird Drive building has been on the market for about five months.

"I had a couple of other buyers looking at it, but their needs went away," Papillo said. "It's very fortunate the timing was right for their (Captive-Air's) expansion needs."

Sikur thinks expanding its Redding operation will help Captive-Aire gain an even stronger foothold in the West.

"Redding has been a good city to work in," Sikur said. "Obviously we are satisfied because we are spending more than a million dollars in the building."

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