

ge Link: <https://www.northernkentuckyusa.com/news/abb-optical-group-announces-new-distribution-center-in-florence-creation-of-more-jobs>

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FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 7, 2017) – Gov. Matt Bevin today announced ABB OPTICAL GROUP, a distributor of optical products, has chosen Florence for its new distribution center and optical laboratory. The company plans to invest as much as \$27 million in the project, which is expected to create up to 223 full-time jobs.

“We are pleased to welcome ABB OPTICAL GROUP to Kentucky,” said Gov. Bevin. “The company has recognized the many advantages of locating here, particularly in regard to logistics and an ability to better serve customers across the United States. We are grateful to ABB for recognizing the strength of the Northern Kentucky workforce, and we are excited to see the company grow and prosper in the years ahead.”

ABB will lease approximately 115,000 square feet of space in Florence to expand its capacity and better serve customers across the United States. The distribution center and Digital Eye Lab will serve as a major hub for the company’s entire US distribution and lab footprint.

“To better serve our customers, we are expanding our footprint in the central part of the United States,” said Brad Weinbrum, president of ABB OPTICAL GROUP. “We appreciate the efforts of the state of Kentucky and the Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development to get us to this point. We look forward to growing our business, creating more jobs and supporting the local community for many years to come.”

Founded in 1989, ABB employs nearly 1,500 people across the US and has five distribution centers located in New York, Massachusetts, Florida, Ohio and California. The company supplies nearly two-thirds of eye care professionals across the country with brand name contact lenses, ophthalmic lenses, eyewear fabrication and more. Its revenue reached \$1.2 billion in 2016.

Sen. John Schickel, of Union, expressed confidence that ABB will be a great fit for Northern Kentucky.

“With this new investment in our community, Northern Kentucky has once again shown its prowess as a top location for large companies in the United States,” Sen. Schickel said. “With the creation of over 200 jobs and \$27 million in investments, I think it is safe to say that ABB OPTICAL GROUP will be a great economic partner in our region, and I look forward to the completion of this project.”

Rep. Diane St. Onge, of Lakeside Park, said this project represents the type of growth the state legislature has worked to make possible.

“I am thrilled that ABB OPTICAL GROUP is making a \$27 million investment in Florence,” Rep. St. Onge said. “ABB has announced that this location will be their main operational hub and with this development will come an additional 223 good-paying jobs. The House Republican Caucus will continue to fight for job growth and economic opportunity that will benefit every Kentuckian.”

Florence Mayor Diane Whalen said this is the beginning of a strong relationship between the city and company.

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“We are excited to welcome ABB OPTICAL to the City of Florence,” Mayor Whalen said. “ABB has shown themselves to be an innovative company offering state-of-the-art products and solutions, and we look forward to working with them as they open their distribution and R&D operations in our community.”

Northern Kentucky Tri-ED Chair and Kenton County Judge-Executive Kris Knochelmann said the company’s location in Florence reflects positively on the region’s strengths.

“ABB OPTICAL is a welcome addition to Northern Kentucky and a testament to the competitive advantages of our region, both as a centralized logistics hub and a talent-rich location for their research and development lab,” Judge Knochelmann said. “We congratulate them on their decision and look forward to the launch of their operations locally.”

To encourage the investment and job growth in the community, the Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority (KEDFA) preliminarily approved the company for tax incentives up to \$2 million through the Kentucky Business Investment program. The performance-based incentive allows a company to keep a portion of its investment over the agreement term through corporate income tax credits and wage assessments by meeting job and investment targets.

In addition, ABB can receive resources from the Kentucky Skills Network. Through the Kentucky Skills Network, companies can receive no-cost recruitment and job placement services, reduced-cost customized training and job training incentives. In fiscal year 2017, the Kentucky Skills Network provided training for more than 120,000 Kentuckians and 5,700 companies from a variety of industry sectors.

For more information on ABB OPTICAL GROUP, visit www.abboptical.com.