

## Whirlpool decision is called a vote of confidence in Marion

BY JOHN JARVIS • The Marion Star • October 9, 2010

MARION - Whirlpool Corp.'s decision to build a distribution center adjacent to its current facility is a vote of confidence in the Marion area from the county's largest employer, local officials said.

Whirlpool will invest \$24 million in the 700,000-square-foot facility, at the site of the former Purex plant at 1792 Marion-Agosta Road, said Whirlpool spokeswoman Jill Saletta.

The project was 15 months in the making and will create an undetermined number of jobs, said Craig Thompson, president of Marion CAN DO!, the city and county's economic development agent. He said CAN DO! "served as a conduit for Whirlpool on the purchase of this site."

"I think given the current economic climate, in not only Marion but in Ohio and nationwide, I view this as a very, very encouraging project and an encouraging sign for Marion that a company such as Whirlpool was willing to invest ... \$24 million," Thompson said. "That's a tremendous commitment on their part, and I think that says a lot for Marion."

Mayor Scott Schertzer went a step further. "I think what it means to the city is that Whirlpool is here to stay, and that's obviously very important to the city because we have so many Marion residents that work for Whirlpool."

The Whirlpool plant in Marion employs about 2,800 people.

The company expects construction to begin in November, Saletta said.

The company initiated the project because its existing distribution facility is at capacity. The company leases additional warehouse space for finished dryer units in Groveport, 40 miles away, she said.

"We were competing with Groveport," Thompson said. "So the fact that they decided to invest in Marion at that particular location not only creates new jobs in the distribution facility, it also retains jobs in the existing distribution facility."

He attributed the ongoing Northwest Industrial Connector project, which will link Ohio 95 and Marion-Williamsport Road, as a factor in Whirlpool's decision.

"I don't think it's a coincidence the site they're going to be locating in is adjacent to the Northwest Connector," he said. "It played some role. I'm sure it was a consideration and that it played into evaluating efficiency and logistics."

Thompson said CAN DO! was approached by two Whirlpool executives 15 months ago, seeking assistance in finding additional distribution space. He said CAN DO! provided a list of three or four sites, which the company narrowed to the former Purex location.

He said Whirlpool will demolish the former Purex building.