

Takigawa breaks ground

Ceremony marks start of facility that will employ 180

By Forrest Berkshire, Editor
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Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin, center, on right, standing beside Hiroyuki Takigawa, whose family owns Takigawa Corporation, along with company and public officials, participates in the ceremonial groundbreaking for a new manufacturing facility in the Bardstown-Nelson County industrial park Friday.

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Hiroyuki Takigawa, president of Takigawa Corporation, speaks to assembled guests at a groundbreaking for the Japanese company's first U.S. facility, which will employ up to 180 people in Bardstown.

They started with 150 potential sites and narrowed the list to 50. Then it was five.

But in the end, it was Bardstown that topped the list of sites for Takigawa Corporation's first North American site, said its president, Hiroyuki Takigawa, at the company's ceremonial groundbreaking Friday.

Takigawa said it was on their second visit, while he was talking with Kim Huston in her Nelson County Economic Development Agency office, that Judge-Executive Dean Watts stopped by just to say "Hi" and shake his hand.

"It was at that time I felt the warmth and friendliness of the leaders in Bardstown," Takigawa recalled.

Takigawa said it was a "very difficult" decision during that final round of site selection. Other states and cities had also offered them economic incentives.

"To make a long story short, the main reason why we at Takigawa chose Bardstown from the final list of five was because we felt something special about your beautiful city and all the fantastic support and hospitality extended to us at every turn," he said. "Thank you, Bardstown, for making us feel wanted and welcome."

A crowd of about 100 company officials, state and local elected leaders and others gathered under a tent at the facility's future site in the Bardstown-Nelson County Industrial Park Friday for the ceremony.

"You have to stop winning so much here in Nelson County," said Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin, who attended the ceremony.



“Tradition matters, and history matters,” Bevin said, and credited the Bardstown area’s strength in those areas as contributing to its success in recruiting several new businesses in recent years.

The 148,000 square-foot, \$46 million facility, which will produce plastic packaging, is scheduled to open on an 18-acre site next spring and employ 180 workers.

Bevin, who was a businessman before he was elected governor, said selecting a site to expand a business is a difficult choice.

“The reason it ultimately becomes possible is because of people like you, who are from the community,” he told the crowd. “To move to different countries around the world is to take great risk.”

“It’s to take the risk of failure, yet that’s how greatness comes.”

The company was founded in 1907 by Hiroyuki’s grandfather, who made musical instruments using ivory, he said Friday. In 1947, the company took a different direction and it pioneered production of polyethylene tubes in 1953 and high-grade gravure printed bags back in 1967. The company was an early pioneer in re-sealable and slide-locking packaging, according to a press release accompanying Friday’s event.

The company built its first plant outside of Japan in Vietnam in 2011, and has sales offices in Canada, Europe, Singapore and California.

The company’s decision to come to Bardstown was announced in December and excavation started in recent weeks on the site. But Friday’s ceremony marked the culmination of a long courtship by both state and local economic development officials.

“It was one of those projects at first sight that we wanted here,” Huston said.



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Cast members of the Stephen Foster Drama perform “My Old Kentucky Home” during a groundbreaking ceremony Friday for Takigawa Corporation. Local elected officials were sure to mention the Drama’s need for support while Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin, pictured behind the singers, was present, and state Sen. Jimmy Higdon, pictured standing beside Bevin, made a point of inviting him to opening night.