

# ABILENE, TEXAS:

## A Manufacturing Powerhouse Backed by Robust Education Resources



**M**anufacturing success hinges on two key factors: a well-thought-out business plan and a strategic location teeming with essential resources and a skilled workforce. Abilene, Texas emerges as a standout choice when considering the ideal site for manufacturing endeavors.

### Expansion Fuels Economic Growth

Last year, the Development Corporation of Abilene (DCOA) announced a \$60 million expansion of Bridgestone Bandag, a Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations (BATO) division. Bridgestone Bandag, a

global leader of medium and heavy-duty truck tires for North America's original equipment and replacement markets, has been an integral part of the Abilene community for more than half a century.

This expansion, which adds 50,000 square feet to the existing 200,000-square-foot facility, is about more than just growth in physical space. It signifies growth in jobs, revenues and community prosperity. It is expected to create 25 new jobs, retain 179 full-time employees and contribute approximately \$21 million in taxes to the City of Abilene, Taylor County and Abilene Independent School District.

"To have a company that has invested such a long history of manufacturing in Abilene and make this additional commitment, is a true highlight of the exciting things happening in Abilene," said Misty Mayo, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Development Corporation of Abilene. "Bridgestone Bandag's expansion project is representative of the type of work the DCOA prioritizes — building long-term partnerships with local existing companies."

### Bridgestone Bandag Has a Committed Partner in the DCOA

The DCOA is the economic development driver of Abilene, and the organization's mission is building the future of Abilene by attracting and sustaining industries that support job creation, fostering strong business and ensuring a prosperous community. The DCOA worked intensively with Bridgestone Bandag to facilitate this expansion and create an unrivaled seamless experience. The results are paying off for Abilene.

Over the next 10 years, the total estimated economic impact, direct and indirect, of the expansion is \$1.81 billion. This \$60 million expansion marks the fifth largest project in the DCOA's history and continues to prove Abilene has a successful platform for business growth. By creating true partnerships with companies, the DCOA works creatively to find ways to meet their needs locally and to support their future prosperity in the community.

"We want to ensure Abilene's companies stay here, grow here and prosper here," said Mayo. "The Development Corporation of Abilene is invested in the success and future of the community."

The DCOA noted that the decision by Bridgestone Bandag to expand in Abilene is a testament to the region's robust business environment and high quality of life.

"Bridgestone Bandag is a well-established and respected company in our community," said Sam Vinson, DCOA Board Chair. "This expansion project brings immense value to our community because Bridgestone Bandag has chosen to grow here in Abilene, Texas."

For its part, Bridgestone Bandag noted that its decision to grow in Abilene was driven by the success it has experienced

in the community in the past, according to Chris Daniel, Executive Director of Bandag Manufacturing, Bridgestone Americas, at the groundbreaking ceremony.

"Today, we celebrate the growth and commitment of this plant and this community, with new investment and a physical expansion driven by growing demand for our products and, just as fundamentally, by this team's commitment to delivering innovation and superior quality for our customers here and around the world," said Daniel. "Our company and our Abilene team have a vital role to play in the transformation of mobility brought forth by a desire of building greener retreads while helping maximize fuel efficiency for fleets."

The expansion's significance goes beyond mere numbers. It's about planning for future-ready manufacturing, leveraging automation to meet the burgeoning demand in the retread tire industry. As a leading tire retread manufacturer, Bridgestone Bandag's expansion involves developing an automated rubber mixing and production operation. This aligns perfectly with Bridgestone's broader commitment to sustainability.

### A Sustainable Approach

This expansion provides forward momentum — one that includes building a sustainable future. Bridgestone Bandag's investment aligns with its E8 Commitment, a visionary program to achieve carbon neutrality in mobility by 2050. This program encompasses eight core values, each beginning with the letter "E," including Energy, Ecology and Efficiency. It underscores Bridgestone's dedication to sustainability and determination to contribute to a greener, more fuel-efficient future, especially for commercial fleets.

Retread tires aren't merely cost-effective; they also represent an environmentally responsible way to extend the lifecycle of tires. Since its inception in 1957, Bandag has been instrumental in diverting approximately 300 million tires away from landfills, significantly reducing material emissions, water consumption and energy use associated with producing new tires. The Bandag retreading process has also conserved approximately four billion gallons of oil.



### An Ideal Central Location in the United States

Abilene, Texas, is located in Taylor County, Texas, directly on I-20, just two and half hours from the Dallas/Fort Worth metro area, making it strategically located in the south-central United States. Abilene's metropolitan statistical area, a three-county region, has a population of 179,308.

Global leaders in the manufacturing industry recognize Abilene as a premier location for their companies due to the region's reliable infrastructure, pro-business environment conducive to economic growth and progressive business incentives, all of which enable a healthy and robust business environment.

### Strong Support from Abilene Education Resources

The project taps into Abilene's skilled labor force in the manufacturing industry, a situation bolstered by the region's education initiatives, which provide the necessary education to support future workforce needs.

Four universities, a technical college, a community college and unique training opportunities for high school students help ensure that Abilene-based

companies have enough talent in the pipeline to hire the workers they need.

The Development Corporation of Abilene has a one-of-a-kind program called NEXTUniversity, which prepares and trains students for degree programs through local independent school districts in the area. NEXTU is a career development program that assists young professionals in pursuing careers like welding, industrial systems, aircraft maintenance, nursing and more. Through high school and beyond, NEXTU students are supported with scholarship dollars that pay for their technical classes, books, supplies

and tools. With guidance from a career coach, NEXTU students obtain industry-based certifications and connections to their careers. Today, more than 13,000 students are actively being educated in Abilene. Primary manufacturing is a focus at institutions like Texas State Technical College (TSTC) and Cisco College.

In addition to powerful professionals, the community has a robust infrastructure and a strategic location in the south-central United States that secures Abilene as the premier location for manufacturing. The future is bright in Abilene, Texas.

