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Drug maker banks on city

Company adding 350 jobs in \$40 million expansion

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Brookwood Pharmaceuticals Inc. will invest \$40 million and create 350 jobs in a pharmaceutical manufacturing and training facility in Birmingham, a city official said Monday.

The city of Birmingham will be asked to provide \$1.5 million in incentives on the project, said Tracey Morant Adams, the city's economic development director. Jefferson County will consider \$1 million in incentives.

Brookwood has been a valued partner for the city and the expansion is an endorsement of Birmingham as a good place to operate a business, Adams said.

Brookwood has nearly 30 projects under way with major drug and medical-device companies and smaller customers to develop treatments in the diabetes, cancer, heart disease, orthopedics, nervous system and alcoholism markets.

Currently, the drug company has about 80 employees at its location on Tom Martin Drive in the Oxmoor Valley area. Adams said the expansion will bring approximately 100 new jobs into the city in the first phase and the rest in phases over as many as four years.

"In addition to the new jobs, this is broadening us as a health and science sector," Adams said. "It's a big deal."

Adams said Birmingham Mayor Larry Langford will discuss the project at Tuesday's City Council meeting.

The Jefferson County Commission's Finance Committee on Monday set a March 25 public hearing to consider the economic development agreement with Brookwood.

"We are very excited about it," said Commission President Bettye Fine Collins. "They were trying to decide between another state and they chose us. This is an example of cooperation between the city, county and state."

Efforts to reach officials with the Alabama Development Office were unsuccessful.

Brookwood President Art Tipton said the company received tremendous support from the governor, the mayor

and county commissioners. "They have been very helpful," he said. "We are excited about the support we have obtained."

The jobs, which will be located in the old Saks Inc. headquarters off Lakeshore Parkway, include technology and senior-level positions, officials said.

Last summer, Birmingham's Southern Research Institute sold Brookwood to Eden Prairie, Minn.-based SurModics Inc., which agreed to pay \$40 million plus an additional \$22 million if certain milestones are met. Brookwood remained in Birmingham after the deal.

Brookwood started drug formulation research at Southern Research in the mid-1970s and was spun off as a for-profit company in 2005.

It has 20 patents for its injectable implant technology that uses biodegradable polymers to deliver medicine in time-controlled injections. About 60,000 of the particles can fit into a grain of salt.

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