

Gallatin hits high GEAR as manufacturing destination

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Gallatin debuted a major corporate headquarters, manufacturing hub and primary distribution center in late 2007. All three were rolled into the same packaged deal with **Samick Music Corp.**

The piano and guitar manufacturer yanked its North American headquarters from Southern California, where it had been for 23 years.

The Sumner County city of Gallatin, with a population of about 27,000, also saw existing manufacturing companies invest in pricey corporate expansions.

They include ITW/CIP - a manufacturer of automotive fasteners that added 30,000 square feet and 15 new jobs - and Colson of Tennessee, a plastic injection molding plant that completed a 30,000 square foot expansion.

"We are in a growth mode," says Clay Walker, executive director of **Gallatin's Economic Development Agency**. "Corporate headquarters don't come along every day."

The \$7 million Samick campus, which opened in October, has a 200,000-square-foot distribution center and a 14,000-square-foot headquarters.

Also in 2007, **G.F. Puhl** completed a multi-million-dollar relocation from Goodlettsville to a new 51,000-square-foot facility, adding more than 50 jobs. The company manufactures wastepaper and recycling collection systems.

Gallatin competed with sites in Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio for the Samick headquarters, which begs the question - why Gallatin?

Walker links much of Gallatin's recent success to its GEAR program, which stands for Gallatin Expansion And Retention.

GEAR targets Gallatin's manufacturing community and major communities and finds out what they need from the community.

Companies also get together for some serious networking through GEAR and Walker says the connections made are invaluable.