



GE APPLIANCES
a Haier company

REINVENTING U.S. MANUFACTURING: GE APPLIANCES OPENS DOORS TO ALABAMA PLANT EXPANSION

High-tech smart factory uses latest digital technology to improve efficiency

DECATUR, AL – February 24, 2020 – Today, GE Appliances (GEA), a Haier company, unveiled the completion of its \$125 million investment at its refrigeration plant in Decatur, Alabama. The investment boosted production capacity by 25% and ensures early compliance with 2022 refrigerant changes, making the plant a super site for GE Appliances top-freezer refrigeration production. The expansion created 255 new jobs, bringing total employment to 1,300 at the plant.

The investment allowed GE Appliances to increase production to meet growing demand for its top-freezer refrigerators, which are rated number one in the industry for both quality and reliability. The investment is also another step toward fulfilling GEA's strategic goal of becoming the leading major appliances company in the United States.

“Decatur is a great example of how we are infusing digitization and other new technologies to improve safety, quality and manufacturing efficiency in our nine U.S. factories,” said Bill Good, vice president of supply chain for GE Appliances. “Smart factories help us better connect with the consumer by creating a digital thread from the moment the appliance goes into production. We can monitor the production lines from anywhere and pinpoint issues quickly, allowing for production to continue smoothly and efficiently, ensuring we surpass our consumers' expectations of supply chain speed and reliability.”

The state of Alabama, the city of Decatur, the Morgan County Commission, the Morgan County Economic Development Association and the Tennessee Valley Authority have been important partners in the expansion.

Decatur's latest Industry 4.0 technology additions include data visualization, 3-D scanning, rapid prototyping and other “smart” automation that provides the operations team with real-time data to make better and faster decisions. Some specific examples at the Decatur plant include:

- Auto Guided Vehicles (AGVs) are being deployed to move materials throughout assembly processes, reducing damage and eliminating ergonomic issues.

- More than 50 robots perform heavy lifting operations, repetitive tasks, and other precise or ergonomically challenging jobs.
- Engineered and made in the United States, the newest and most advanced fabrication in the industry equipment builds a steel refrigerator case in seconds.
- The plant's new common product architecture and redesigned assembly lines gives it the flexibility to build many different size models to meet shifting customer demand.

Decatur's progress has already been noticed, as the plant was named 2019 Assembly Plant of the Year by Assembly Magazine. "The company's generous investment helped transform this 42-year-old facility into a Manufacturing Center of Excellence for top-freezer refrigerators," said Renee Story, plant executive director for GE Appliances. "Adding technology and increased production capability helped our already amazing team move manufacturing to the next level."

The GE Appliances Decatur team has paid special attention to talent and workforce development to help employees operate the advanced manufacturing machinery and equipment. From partnering with Alabama Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (ALFAME) to conducting hydraulics training through a local supplier to implementing on-site training for Programmable Logic Controllers, educating and developing employees to thrive in this modern manufacturing facility is a priority.

The Decatur plant is the largest employer at a single location in Morgan County, Alabama. GE Appliances transacts approximately \$58 million in business with suppliers across Alabama, a number that will grow with the newly expanded Decatur facility's increase in production. Over the next five years, the Decatur plant is expected to increase its already substantial annual economic impact in the state of Alabama.

About GE Appliances

GE Appliances, a Haier company, creates "good things, for life" through our passion for great appliances and the happiness they can bring to every household. With the Monogram®, CAFÉ™, GE Profile™, GE®, Haier and Hotpoint brands, people have more choices for making their kitchens and homes amazing each day. Our products include refrigerators, freezers, cooking products, dishwashers, washers, dryers, air conditioners and water filtration systems. For more information, visit www.geappliances.com/our-company.

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