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By Henry Bury
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The site of a former municipal snow dump is now home to a new central warehouse facility for Halla Climate Control Canada Inc. in the city's Northeast Industrial Park.

And it's expected that by next summer, production of new automotive air conditioning components will also be taking place at the new plant.

Halla officially opened its third production facility in Belleville Monday, at 405 College St. East in the Northeast Industrial Park.

Yong Hwan Park, Halla's managing director, took representatives of Belleville's economic development committee and Quinte Economic Development Commission on a tour of the new 110,000 square foot facility that opened in July as a warehouse operation.

Its more than 700 employees were also given tours afterwards.

"We are proud of having your full support and dedication," Park told the visiting civic dignitaries. "We want to continue to make our success felt in Belleville."

Park said the dedication of Halla's team members has been the most important factor "in making this company a success so far."

"We have lots of positive reply and feedback from our customers on our current service and, therefore, I wish to make Halla a continued success in the future," he said.

George Beer, chairman of Belleville's economic development committee, said Monday's official opening of Halla's newest plant "is

just a great day for the city of Belleville."

It not only serves the automotive trade sector "but also what that means for the city of Belleville is many hundreds of jobs. It means much more assessment for the city," Beer said.

"And they have just been such a good corporate citizen that it's a pleasure to work with Halla and see them open today."

Belleville Mayor George Zegouras told Park his company has come a long way in its 14-year history in the city.

"You came here with 25 employees and everyone thought it was a joke. Now you have several hundred workers... you have been a great corporate citizen of our community," he said.

Park was presented with a framed certificate from the mayor and a

wall clock from the economic development committee to help Halla "keep on time" with their deliveries.

Halla actually began with 20 workers in 1989 at 400 College St. East — almost directly across from its new warehouse facility — and it added a second production facility at 360 University Ave. in 1997.

Halla produces air conditioning components for the Big Three automakers — General Motors, Ford and DaimlerChrysler. These air conditioning components include H-Vac modules, accumulators and tube and hose long lines.

Patricia Glancey, Halla's human resources manager, said the company currently employs more than 700 workers between the three plants.

Construction of the newest plant began last fall and was completed in July. The facility is being used as the central warehouse and shipping operation for all three plants.

The plant receives all Halla's raw materials. All finished goods from the other two plants are brought to the new facility and then shipped to customers.

"With all the warehousing and shipping and receiving centralized at our new plant, we have closed the warehouse on the former Corby Distilleries property in Corbyville which was being leased by Halla," she said.

Glancey said Halla intends to begin production of air conditioning components at the new plant by "no later than" next summer. She estimates between half to one-third of the facility will be devoted to production, with the remaining space for warehousing, shipping and receiving.

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