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# Jobs, Expansions, Growth Defy the Economic Slump

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THE LEDGER

Published: Friday, April 24, 2009 at 12:01 a.m.

LAKELAND | Finding good news in this economy can be a challenge. Polk County is dealing with rising unemployment and imperiled housing markets, but local business isn't ready to throw in the towel.

Friday's Business section focused on projects on the east side of the county. Today, we focus on the Lakeland area.

### WELLDYNE RX

WellDyne RX, a Colorado-based pharmacy services firm, moved into its new Lakeland home in March.

The company, which provides mail-order pharmacy services for private and government health plans, says it will hire about 100 workers this year. Positions of need include pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, call center, sales and information technology staff.

"We've probably received over 700 resumes over the course of the last four months," said Susan Cain, WellDyne's chief operating officer.

WellDyne officials say hiring will ramp up next year, with nearly 600 additional jobs at the company's 66,000-square-foot facility near County Line and Swindell roads.

### GTECH



MICHAEL WILSON | THE LEDGER  
CONSTRUCTION WORKERS are finishing the new Ring Power Corp. facility near the intersection of the Polk Parkway and U.S. 98 South in Lakeland.

GTech Printing Corp. of Plant City, a high-tech producer of scratch-off lottery tickets, has established a \$45 million, 100,000-square-foot facility on Frontage Road and plans to begin operating in May.

About 100 current employees will be transferring to the Lakeland site, but GTech plans to add roughly 200 workers within the next three to five years.

The firm is keeping its Plant City facility open.

GTech Printing is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Providence, R.I.-based GTech Corp., a lottery technology and services firm.

## **RING POWER**

Ring Power Corp., one of the largest Caterpillar dealers in the Southeast, is building a 90,000-square-foot dealership near the intersection of the Polk Parkway and U.S. 98.

Officials say the new facility should open in August, with a staff of about 40 employees. It will be the second Ring Power site in Polk; the other is in Mulberry.

"We've been in this area working with the phosphate industry and general construction for the last 40 years, and we feel it's time for the Lakeland area - because of its size and location - to have a full-service Caterpillar dealership," said Scott Bassett, a vice president and regional manager with St. Augustine-based Ring Power.

## **CITIZENS BANK**

Lake Wales-based Citizens Bank & Trust is finishing the initial phase of its West Polk County expansion.

Last September the bank established a Lakeland headquarters in the former R.G. Crown building on Lake Morton, and officials are now completing two permanent branches in Lakeland and Bartow.

The 4,000-square-foot Bartow office opens this month and an 8,000-square-foot Lakeland branch on Edgewood Drive should be finished by mid-May. The 89-year-old bank currently has about \$390 million in total assets, and 12 offices (including temporary sites that will be replaced by the new branches).

## **DCTI**

The Corporate College at Polk Community College in Lakeland debuted a program for local construction and engineering businesses this month.

The Design & Construction Technologies Institute (DCTI) will offer specialized

training for area construction, engineering and architectural firms, with classes taught by working professionals. Initial courses will cover topics such as project management, estimation and cost control, and basic AutoCAD.

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