

# Eudora uniform business to grow

## Superior to close Georgia facilities

by [Stephen Steed](#) | Today at 2:07 a.m.



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Florida-based Superior Group of Companies will move its distribution operations from Georgia to Eudora, where it already employs about 200 people.

The move is part of the company's announcement in November that it would invest \$10 million in the Eudora facility and hire another 125 workers during the next five years, Charles Sheppard, senior vice president of global sourcing and distribution for Superior, said Thursday by telephone.

At 220,000 square feet, the Eudora facility is Superior Group's largest distribution center, Sheppard said. It also is the company's most technologically advanced center, with robotic cranes retrieving boxes of uniforms and other products from high shelves and delivering them to workers for final packing and shipping, Sheppard said.

The technology has made the company more efficient and enabled it to make more hires in Eudora and expand operations there, Sheppard said.

Based in Seminole, Fla., Superior and its companies manufacture and ship millions of uniforms used in the health care, retail, transportation, security and food service industries.

The Eudora center will expand by 40,000 square feet as part of Superior's plan announced last fall. Superior Group and Chicot Memorial Medical Center in Lake Village are the biggest employers in Chicot County.

Founded as a family business on Long Island, N.Y., and now publicly traded, Superior is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, with the Eudora plant being part of that history for more than 50 years.

"We started here with 100,000 square feet when it was the manufacturing headquarters," Sheppard said of what was then called the Eudora Garment Co. "We had facilities all over, like in Hamburg and Pine Bluff, when sewing actually was being done in the U.S."

As garment and textiles manufacturing across the U.S. moved overseas, the company redeveloped the Eudora plant as a distribution center, Sheppard, who has been with Superior since 1985, said. "Eudora's always been a very special place for the company," he said.

The Eudora expansion comes from the closing of distribution operations in Alpharetta, Ga., and Gainesville, Ga. "It was determined that the Georgia facilities could not be significantly upgraded in a manner that would make economic sense," Superior said in a news release. The move is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

The uniforms shipped from Eudora are made by High Performance Identity, a division of Superior, which in 2018 changed its name from Superior Uniform Group to Superior Group of Companies to better reflect its diversification into promotional products and call centers.

Sheppard, with a laugh, recalled that Gov. Asa Hutchinson inadvertently and prematurely announced the closing of the Georgia operations with an offhand comment during a groundbreaking ceremony in Eudora some weeks ago. "He wasn't supposed to do that, but he did."

Superior has received a \$1.6 million Community Development Block Grant from the Arkansas Economic Development Commission to help with the project. It also is eligible for tax credits.

Superior on April 30 reported net income of \$3.4 million, or 22 cents per share, for the year's first quarter. That compared with \$2.4 million, or 16 cents per share, for the first quarter of 2019. Net sales increased 8.9% to \$94.2 million.

The coronavirus pandemic, according to the company, had boosted sales for uniforms used in health care, grocery stores and in other retail sectors but slowed sales of uniforms used in the hospitality and transportation industries. Events canceled by the pandemic also resulted in fewer sales of its marketing and promotional items, the company said.

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