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~Chinese Furniture Assembler Will Create 300 Jobs Over Three Year Period~

DANVILLE – **GOK International**, a Chinese furniture assembler, announced plans today to locate its sales and headquarters office at Old Belt One in the River District of Danville, and its assembly and showroom operations at the 40,000 square foot Cane Creek Shell Building in Ringgold, Virginia. The shell building was constructed by Quality Construction in partnership with the Regional Industrial Facility Authority (RIFA) on property owned by RIFA. The Danville Industrial Development Authority is purchasing the building and leasing it to the company

The company committed to employ 300 people within three years of the start of operations in the region, and it will make capital investments totaling \$12,500,000. Employment should begin in earnest early in 2013 with the overall average wage at \$30,000. GOK International will specialize in office, hotel, and institutional furniture, utilizing the latest advanced manufacturing techniques to assemble and finish furniture.

The United States Federal Government has placed a significant importation tax on Chinese furniture, which has made it more expensive to manufacture and assemble furniture in China for the U.S. market.

The anti-dumping law is expected to be a long term trade policy change with China. GOK International, therefore, will ship furniture components to the United States for final assembly to by-pass the high import duty.

“We have a very good relationship with Pittsylvania County and Danville, which is important for us in reaching a decision to make our first investment in the United States. The plant’s location is only an hour and fifteen minutes from the vast furniture markets of High Point”, stated GOK International President Kevin Liao.

Mayor Sherman Saunders, Chairman of the Danville Pittsylvania County Regional Industrial Facility Authority (RIFA), said, “I have met Kevin and his team over dinner, and can say that we have a first class company coming to the region. I am delighted that we can accommodate both their headquarters and assembly space in the City of Danville and Pittsylvania County, which demonstrates the importance of working together as a team under the auspices of RIFA.”

Tim Barber, Chairman of the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors stated, “We are excited to have a Chinese company agree to create new jobs and invest several million dollars in the region. The assembly jobs are much needed and will help re-employ our work force.”

Delegate Danny Marshall, also a member of the Tobacco Commission, said, “The Tobacco Commission is all about improving the economy of the regions that it serves. This project is one which the Commission was able to support with a \$1,000,000 grant from its Tobacco Region Opportunity Fund, and it is just the kind of project that we need in our community to improve our local economy.”

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