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Latexco to open latex manufacturing plant in Lavonia *Facility to employ over 40 by 2007*

Atlanta, March 27, 2006—The Georgia Department of Economic Development announced today that Latexco, the world's largest producer of latex foam bedding components, will open its first U.S. latex production facility in Lavonia, Ga. The company will produce latex foam bed toppers and foam quilting rolls at the facility, investing over \$10 million and employing 40 people by 2007.

"We are excited that Latexco has chosen Georgia to build this state-of-the-art facility and manufacture such a marketable product. "This investment is a great result of Georgia's work to foster connections with international companies and other countries," said Georgia Department of Economic Development Commissioner Craig Lesser.

The new facility is scheduled to open in July 2006. Initially, production will focus on fabricating and distributing bed toppers and rolls made with imported raw materials from Spain and Belgium. The facility will manufacture mattress cores as the U.S. market grows.

"With existing production facilities in Belgium, Spain and Indonesia, it makes sense to develop and service the North American market with domestic production of latex cores, toppers, rolls and pillows as soon as possible. The time is now to establish a world-class, customer-driven manufacturing facility in the United States," said Latexco owner and CEO Luc Maes.

"Latexco's move to Franklin County will have a positive impact on the economy of our community and our region, and we are delighted they have selected Lavonia for their entry location into the U.S. market. Latexco has established a reputation in Europe as a company that values their employees, their community and their environment, and we are excited and happy to be working with them," says Ralph Owens, mayor of Lavonia and chairman of the Franklin County Industrial Building Authority.

Latexco is the world's leading manufacturer of latex foam components for the bedding industry. Headquartered in Tielt, Belgium, Latexco has 490 employees worldwide with production plants in Belgium, Spain and Indonesia. Sales figures for the company reached over \$111 million USD in 2005, and the company produced one million mattress cores, over one million pillows, and two million toppers and quilting rolls.

The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) is the state's sales and marketing arm, the lead agency for attracting new business investment, encouraging the expansion of existing industry and small businesses, locating new markets for Georgia products, attracting tourists to Georgia, and promoting the state as a location for film, video and music projects, as well as planning and mobilizing state resources for economic development. For more information, visit www.georgia.org.

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