

# approves funding request from Danfoss- Scroll Carrier discusses rail option for Clark County Industrial Park

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Siftings Herald

During a special meeting Tuesday, the Economic Development Corp. of Clark County voted unanimously to fund Danfoss-Scroll Technologies \$14,900 for two operational training sessions, with more funding possible at a later date.

Shawnie Carrier, executive director of the EDCCC, said it was Scroll's first request for EDCCC funding.

The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote of 10 present members.

Carrier also brought discussion of funding the drawing of a rail option for the Clark County Industrial Park, in the amount of about \$10,000. Carrier said she has been talking to a prospect (the name of which she would not disclose) for a year and its owners have shown an interest in a site in the industrial park. "Landing this industry is contingent" on having a rail option, she said.

EDCCC member Bill Wright, who is also president of the Clark County Industrial Council, added that there are currently at least two industries in the park that would be able to use a rail option, including Drumco. "It would also be a marketing tool."

Members also discussed the possibility of a trans-loading facility for the rail option, a place where rail

cars could spur off the main tracks and back up to a loading dock to ship goods from the industrial park to wherever they are needed.

The motion carried. State Rep. Randy Stewart attended the meeting to discuss the possibility of a three-county regional mobility authority to bring about improvements to transporting goods. The area would encompass Clark, Pike and Montgomery counties. It is one of the only areas in south Arkansas that does not have a regional mobility authority to get much-needed projects on top of the state's list of transportation improvements.

Some of the improvements an authority could push for could include the railroad between Antoine and Gurdon (increasing travel speed of trains from 4 miles per hour to up to 25 miles per hour) or improving Highway 26 southwest of Arkadelphia for goods to be shipped from Amity to Antoine and beyond.

An incentive policy recently brought to EDCCC members was also adopted.

Under the Clark County Advantage Program, a qualifying business shall include the targeted sectors of alternative energy; customer development centers; distribution/logistics; and green/sustainable building products before being eligible for incentives

offered through the Arkansas Economic Development Commission.

"In general, retail, service, government and non-profit businesses are not eligible to receive incentives that are funded through the local economic development sales tax," the policy states. "However, retail and retirement services sectors should be eligible to receive incentives funded through the county and/or the city where the project is located or potentially the (Arkadelphia Regional Economic Development) Alliance."

If in an eligible sector, the company must also create or retain at least 10 full-time jobs and pay at least 100 percent of the average wage of the county, which is currently estimated to be \$32,692.

Incentive grants will be awarded for new job creation of new or existing business on a five-level system.

Level 1 projects will create jobs with wages greater than 100 percent but less than 110 percent of the average Clark County wage, and the total amount should not exceed \$1,250 per job. Level 5 projects will create jobs with wages greater than 200 percent of the average Clark County wage, and the total amount should not exceed \$10,000 per job.

The motion carried unanimously.