

Pulaski yacht builder to expand workforce by up to 150

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Johanna Belongia cleans a 50-foot yacht in May 2010, at Marquis Yachts LLC in Pulaski. / File/Press-Gazette Media

PULASKI —Pulaski-based yacht builder Marquis Yachts LLC said Wednesday it has reached an agreement with a Dutch company to build its yachts in Pulaski, creating up to 150 additional jobs. The agreement between Marquis and VanDutch Marine is effective immediately and production is expected to start this month. Marquis will manufacture all VanDutch yachts for the global market ranging in size from 30 to 70 feet.

Marquis expects to hire as many as 50 to 70 employees in the next 30 to 60 days with future plans to expand up to 150 new workers in the coming months.

The deal came together in about 90 days, said Robert VanGrunsvan, president and CEO of Marquis, which also manufactures Carver Yachts. VanDutch production tools and fixtures will be moved from Europe to Pulaski. “Contract manufacturing is very prevalent in Europe,” VanGrunsvan said about this kind of production agreement. “We have an agreement we believe that is going to go for several years and we’re looking forward to it.”

New jobs in Pulaski aren’t just focused on production, but also include engineering and office positions, he said. Yacht design will remain in Europe. “We’re looking for employees as we speak,” VanGrunsvan said.

The first boat out of the Pulaski plant is expected to be a 40-foot yacht. The VanDutch production area will be separate from other production lines at the Pulaski plant.

“We’re anxious to get this going,” VanGrunsvan said.

Marquis traces its roots back to the late 1950s and the Carver boat and yacht lines. More recently, the company emerged from bankruptcy under the Marquis name in January 2010 with owners John Paul DeJoria and Irwin Jacobs at the helm.

VanDutch was formed in 2008 with its first yachts hitting the market in 2009.



Carlos Hernandez works in the cockpit area of a boat under production at the Marquis facility in December 2011 in Pulaski. / File/Press-Gazette Media