

PEDA plans \$1M incentive to lure railroad car manufacturer to Stanley Business Park

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PITTSFIELD -- The Pittsfield Economic Development Authority wants to lure a railroad car manufacturer to the city -- and it is planning to sweeten the deal by offering a \$1 million incentive.

The William Stanley Business Park of the Berkshires, which is managed by PEDA, is one of four proposed county sites currently being proposed as suitable for a manufacturer that would make new railway cars for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.

A manufacturer hasn't been chosen yet, and the project isn't expected to commence until 2015.

Two of the other sites are in Lee, while the fourth is in Dalton. The Stanley Business Park is the only site currently under consideration in Pittsfield, although its possible another city site could be chosen. All four of the current sites have access to rail. New Bedford also is believed to be interested in the proposal.

PEDA's Executive Director Cory Thurston said the MBTA is seeking a manufacturer to build new railway cars for its Orange and Red lines. But the state is requiring that the final assembly of the cars be conducted in Massachusetts.

He said the initiative, worth in excess of \$800 million, could last 10 years and bring between 200 and 250 jobs to the Berkshires.

PEDA and 1Berkshire, the county's leading economic development agency, are both putting together proposals to "sell manufacturers" on the Berkshires, Thurston said.

PEDA's board voted unanimously on Tuesday to approve the \$1 million incentive as a way to help bring the manufacturer to Pittsfield and alleviate construction costs. PEDA's executive committee is expected to work out the exact details of that offer by February. The funding would come from PEDA's financial reserves.

Thurston said PEDA would consider placing the facility in an area known as the "40s," which is located across Kellogg Street from the authority's administration building.

There are existing building foundations that General Electric left behind on that parcel, and Thurston said engineering studies are currently taking place to determine if those areas could house the type of facility a manufacturer would need to construct.

In other business, PEDA's board voted unanimously to approve a \$64,500 allocation that will allow the quasi-public agency to fund the second phase of the city's project to build a life sciences building at the Stanley Business Park.

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