

1702 Bufford Drive  
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## Executive Summary Shandong Ruyi Technology Group Forrest City, Arkansas, Plant

In April, Shandong Ruyi Technology Group, headquartered in Jinjiang, Shandong Province, China, purchased the former Sanyo Manufacturing Co. plant in Forrest City. The 1.4 million-square-foot complex, which at one time in the 1990s employed 1,500 people, had been vacant since 2010.

Their initial project team arrived in town June 23 and they are currently involved in all phases of startup, from discussions with architects, engineers and contractors to setting up offices in the plant.

Ruyi plans to establish its first presence in North America at the site: a spinning mill which will produce superfine yarn from Arkansas cotton.

- At full production, the mill will use 200,000 tons of cotton annually
- That is approximately equal to the entire state's cotton production in 2016
- Yarn spun from the cotton will be at least initially shipped back to China for use in weaving and knitting mills there
- They will be a major user of electricity. Entergy Arkansas will build a substation on the company's property to supply its power needs
- Operations will be round-the-clock, seven days a week.

Ruyi expects to hire, beginning late this year, 800 people to work in the plant. Production is expected to begin next summer.

- Hiring will be in stages. According to agreements signed with the state, hiring will be phased in over a seven-year period starting next year
- Renovation of the initial manufacturing areas will begin this fall
- Once that is completed, work will begin on building two additional manufacturing buildings, which will be located to the east of the current plant

### Workforce issues

- Plan to profile jobs at their similar plant in China to determine skill level required
- Working with Department of Workforce Services and East Arkansas Community College to utilize Career Readiness Certificate program for screening of qualified applicants
- From early discussions, skill levels appear to be semi-skilled, with good reading and mathematics skills as well as basic computer literacy

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- Laborshed for the plant, according to labor yield study performed last year by Younger Associates economic development research firm from Memphis, indicates workers will come from as far as Memphis, Jonesboro, Searcy and Helena for jobs
- Average starting pay \$15/hour

Since the Ruyi announcement, Forrest City has seen two hotels purchased and in the process of renovation, one restaurant announce ts location, and other businesses planning to locate or expand.

