

National call center to locate in Bardstown - Will bring upwards of 450 jobs

The Kentucky Standard – 2009 by Lydelle Abbott

SYKES Enterprises will operate its newest state-of-the-art call center, employing 450-500 people in the next year, in Bardstown, city and county officials announced Wednesday.

The Tampa, Fla.-based company will set up shop in the Kentucky Home Square Shopping Center in the former Winn Dixie building, Nelson County Economic Development Agency President Kim Huston said.

Customer service representatives will field inbound calls for a major communications client, Andrea Burnett, director of corporate communications for SYKES, said.



The majority of positions will be customer service representatives with a few managerial spots available, Burnett said.

SYKES employs more than 35,000 people at more than 45 call centers throughout the world, Burnett said.

Specializing in providing flexible, high-quality customer support and outsourcing solutions, SYKES emphasizes inbound technical support and customer service, according to its Web site.

Positions will start at \$9 per hour with competitive benefits, Burnett said.

A three-day job fair will be held for those interested in applying with the company July 16-18 in Jideco Hall at the Mitsuba corporate office, 950 Withrow Court. Hours for the fair will be 11 a.m.- 7 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Saturday.

Renovations have begun on the 31,000-square-foot space. Work should be complete in September, with the facility up and running by October, Huston said.

The company first visited Bardstown in December on a “perfect Bardstown day,” Bardstown Mayor Dick Heaton said.

Resources such as the outdoor theater are an economic tool that separates Bardstown and Nelson County from other small towns in Kentucky, Nelson County Judge Executive Dean Watts said.

“We like Bardstown. People there have a terrific work ethic,” Burnett said.

The company’s move will not only be good for Bardstown, but the region, Huston said.

Heaton said “four hundred jobs anywhere in Kentucky right now is great news.” He added that SYKES would help to diversify the employment base in Nelson County, which is heavily tied to automotive manufacturing.

SYKES also has two inbound call centers in Hazard and Morganfield.

According to Good Jobs First, a national policy resource center SYKES has a history of accepting incentives, opening facilities and closing after a few years.

Hazard was one of the places that SYKES stayed for a short time. The company was first there from 1999 to 2003. At that time, Burnett said, the company was offering support to a technology company, which then took a dive, affecting the need for a call center.

Since that time, the company has diversified its client portfolio to include communications and financial service clients, Burnett said. SYKES reopened a call center in Hazard in 2007 and is now one of the company’s more profitable locations, she said.

Huston said there have been no incentives offered to SYKES by the county and their lease agreement is with the property owner.

After speaking with the mayor of Hazard about the company, Heaton said he felt comfortable that SYKES would be a good corporate partner.