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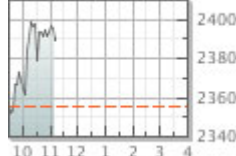
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NSDQ	2390.85	+35.12	(+1.49%)
NYSE	8389.56	+51.16	(+0.61%)
S&P 500	1283.13	+17.06	(+1.35%)
AMEX	2062.79	-37.81	(-1.80%)
RUS 2K	727.99	+14.58	(+2.04%)
Crude Oil	116.18	-3.84	(-3.20%)
30YR Yield	4.56	-0.12	(-2.56%)

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News



A "hostage rescue" team blows open a door in a breaching maneuver during a training demonstration. The class was composed of all South Carolina law enforcement officers training through GTI, which has just relocated its headquarters to Barnwell and Bamberg counties. (photo by Tim Hicks/ Managing Editor)



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Global clients, local company

Wednesday, August 6, 2008 5:34 PM EDT

Police, military training firm locates headquarters in two-county region

Tim Hicks/ Managing Editor

Barnwell and Bamberg counties may seem like rural, remote locations, but it is becoming a destination for some of the world's best police and military groups.

County and state law enforcement officials, politicians and other dignitaries from the state and Barnwell and Bamberg counties welcomed the arrival of GTI into the area.

GTI or Government Training Institute, is a police and military training contractor that has relocated its headquarters and training facilities in Barnwell and Bamberg counties.

GTI officially began its operations in South Carolina July 31 with two ceremonies, one in Denmark and another in Barnwell.

"I'm truly honored that you are here. I'm humbled by the amount of support," said Chadd Harbaugh, GTI's president, at the official opening of its Denmark offices.

"We want to give our nation's finest the tools to succeed," he said. "We must not forget that state and local law enforcement is this nation's first line of defense for homeland security."

Harbaugh also quoted Michaelangelo, the Italian Renaissance artist, stating, "The greater danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we hit it."

"We've got big plans for our operations in South Carolina," he said. "I had unbridled ambitions about what this company would become."

The 195,000-square-foot Denmark facility will be where GTI has its offices and holds classroom training.

The Barnwell facility in the S.C. Advanced Technology Park in Snelling is where GTI will conduct simulations for its students. These simulations could range from hostage rescue scenarios to practicing anti-terrorism tactics.

By relocating here, GTI is making a \$2 million capital investment and creating 15 new jobs in the area.

"This is unique - nobody else can say they have this," said Chris Wilson, the chairman of the Bamberg County Council.

GTI estimates that about 3,000 police officers, military personnel and other emergency officials will be cycling through the area during the course of a year for training, according to its corporate data.

SouthernCarolina Regional Development Alliance, an economic development agency for the counties of Bamberg, Barnwell, Hampton and Allendale, helped entice GTI to the area.

"GTI will bring thousands to our area for three to four weeks at a time," said Kay Still, the chairperson for SouthernCarolina Alliance. "Not only that, it shows regionalism works for Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell and Hampton counties."

Beyond that, Still said GTI's students and involvement promises to improve the economic development of the area overall.

GTI's first class, composed of all South Carolina law enforcement officers, graduated Aug. 1. The class also represents a combined economic impact of \$46,000 spent on food and lodging, Harbaugh said.

"You guys will see a constant flow of international and national visitors into the program," he said.

GTI has trained units from the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Japanese Defense Force, the Ottawa Police Service, National Guard units as well as numerous sheriff and police departments from across the nation.

The idea of that many visitors coming through the area excites Mike Patel, who attended the ceremony. Patel owns the Days Inn, one of only three motels in the city of Barnwell.

Harbaugh, in an earlier June 27 statement announcing GTI's arrival in South Carolina, stated his company was moving here to consolidate its training operations. GTI was originally based in Boise, Idaho.

The company will maintain an office in Boise, Harbaugh said.

To usher in their operations in the Palmetto State, GTI gave a demonstration of police and paramilitary tactics by staging a scenario that involved terrorists taking over an energy plant and seizing hostages.

The scenario was played out at the former Allied General Nuclear Services site in Barnwell.

The Allied facility was to have been a commercial spent nuclear fuel reprocessing plant but it closed in the early 1980s.

Actual GTI students - police officers from S.C. police departments in Rock Hill, Greenville and Richland County - made up the hostage rescue teams.

Stationing themselves outside of exterior doors, the teams, dressed in paramilitary combat gear, blew exterior doors in "breaching" maneuvers and rushed into the old industrial plant to rescue several "hostages."

Overhead, two helicopters each performed "touch-and-go" maneuvers where the aircraft barely touches onto a roof and disgorges hostage-rescue teams, poised on the helicopter skids.

Guest speaker for the opening was Reginald "Reggie" Lloyd, the director of the S.C. State Law Enforcement Division.

"We would like to thank GTI for extending our economies in the area," Lloyd said.

SLED first began training some of its agents through GTI only since this spring, he said.

"More of our members are returning here for advanced training," Lloyd said.

Lloyd is the newly appointed SLED director, having been sworn in March 11.

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