

# Dramatic transformation

## Hitachi Energy's big expansion in Halifax

by Christina Nifong

**B**uilding on a nearly 60-year history in South Boston, Hitachi Energy has committed to investing \$457 million to produce large power transformers in the town previously known for tobacco.

The Swiss tech company, a subsidiary of multinational conglomerate Hitachi, expects to create 825 jobs at the campus, which will be next to Hitachi's existing plant in South Boston, where about 670 people currently work.

"We've had a banner year," says Brian Brown, executive director of the Halifax County Industrial Development Authority.

The 2025 announcement builds on Hitachi's \$26 million expansion of the South Boston plant announced in 2024, and the company's \$22.5 million investment in Bland and Smyth counties, announced in April 2025.

The South Boston facility produces a range of distribution and power transformers and components, seen as critical in light

of increasing demands on electricity driven by data centers, electrification of vehicles and other factors.

Understanding how a company based in Switzerland came to have a major presence in Halifax County requires a quick history lesson. Back in 1968, Westinghouse Electric Corp. opened a power transformer plant in South Boston, and about two decades later, ABB, an electrification and automation company based in Zurich, acquired Westinghouse's electric transmission and distribution business.

In 2020, Hitachi, the Japanese corporation, acquired the bulk of ABB's power grid business. In 2021, Hitachi ABB Power Grids was renamed Hitachi Energy.

The \$457 million Halifax project is part of Hitachi Energy's \$1 billion planned investment in the United States announced last year, as it expands production of critical electrical grid infrastructure. Along with its Bland and Smyth counties investment,

Virginia will receive about half of the total investment.

Once the new South Boston campus is completed, it is expected to be the biggest manufacturing site for large power transformers in the nation.

So, why South Boston?  
"A big factor is, what was your experience previously?" explains Kurt Steinert, head of external communications for Hitachi Energy in North America. "We've had very good experiences. It gives you confidence to continue to invest in a location."

As of early 2026, key construction equipment has been ordered for building the plant, and a groundbreaking ceremony is planned this year, officials say, and hiring of leadership is underway.

Chuck Perrine, Hitachi Energy's North America vice president of operations for power transformers, expects to start shipping large transformers produced in South Boston by 2028. The company's rapid



local growth will have a major impact, Brown says.

As part of the expansion agreement, Halifax County donated 10 acres near the site to develop 96 apartments and 16 single-family homes, addressing a common pain point for local governments and businesses, affordable housing.

The state pitched in \$3 million from various grant programs, and the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission awarded \$500,000 to support design and construction of the community, which is expected to cost about \$35 million. Halifax County also plans

to waive permit and connection fees. Hitachi also will be eligible for a \$29.4 million state grant for preparation and facility costs, subject to approval by the General Assembly.

The county also plans to build a new child care facility to serve parents working first and second shifts.

"For the demographic that will probably make up much of our workforce, child care is going to be immensely important," Perrine notes.

Alongside the new plant, Hitachi Energy is building a training center to prepare its specialized workforce.

"Skilled personnel are essential to what we do," Perrine says. "And when you start growing this rapidly, it's a concern to get that many skilled people."

Halifax County and Hitachi Energy leaders expect to attract employees from a one-hour-drive radius, Perrine says. In addition to engineers and assembly-line workers, the plant will need warehouse operators and managers, nurses for its on-site clinic and cafeteria employees.

"It's not just turning wrenches," Perrine says. "Whatever your skill set is, we have a place for you." ■



[www.blair-construction.com](http://www.blair-construction.com)



# Relationship Contractor