

# Dublin-Laurens County Welcomes Best Buy Facility

Roman Roman Jr., a Florida native and regional general manager of the Best Buy Distribution Center in Dublin, is favorably impressed with the workforce his company discovered when they came to town last year.

"I've not seen people value their jobs anywhere else as much as I have here. Our workers have good values, they are respectful, they want to work, and they know how to pull together to get the job done," he explained on a recent tour of the Best Buy facility. The Dublin plant boasts a six percent turnover rate, which is unusually low for the industry.

"I can relate this low turnover directly to the technical college's (Heart of Georgia Technical College) efforts and Quick Start's detailed and thorough training program," he added.

Roman is especially impressed with Quick Start's pre-hire screening of potential employees. This meant Best Buy had a pool of qualified workers from which to choose, workers that managed to survive the pressures of this past summer's record-breaking heat and the headache of massive ongoing construction all around. He has seen this core group become the mentors for the people hired later.

"With screening you create a group 'culture' that really pays off in production and dedication," says Roman.

Thus far, Best Buy's decision to come to Dublin can be described as an unqualified success. The company chose Dublin over 200 other communities in six states. The decision was made in December 1999. In April 2000, a Training Plan Agreement was signed between the company, Heart of Georgia Technical College, and Quick Start, and the 748,000 square-foot facility was completed by August 2000. Since opening, they have had a 100 percent on-time delivery rate.

"My personal victory is that we opened a new center of this size with absolutely no glitches—none. That is phenomenal, and it represents the work

of a lot of different people and many organizations in this county," says Roman.

The center is located on a 100-acre site not far from the essential I-16. Currently the facility has about 155 employees working two shifts. It plans to be in full operation by this spring, eventually serving six states throughout the Southeast. The Dublin facility is one of seven of Best Buy's distribution centers nationwide, which support 450 stores across the country.

From June to October 2000, more than 200 people went through Quick Start's pre-employment and post-employment classes. Classes include safety, inventory math, ergonomics, scanner operations, receiving and stocking skills, and order processing. Introduction to computer use, including Microsoft Access, Excel, and Word programs, and leadership team building are also part of the training classes.

Best Buy's inventory control and delivery are state-of-the-art. The high-tech forklifts include a scanner and access to computerized inventory, so workers have access all day long to what's in stock. At any given moment at any station, the company has a "snapshot" of available stock. Ten people audit constantly to make sure there are no errors in inventory control. This kind of attention to detail is absolutely essential to the just-in-time process that makes Best Buy successful. In a building with 5 miles of conveyor belts, this level of

accuracy is truly phenomenal.

Roman expects the Dublin facility to expand its operations in the current building this spring to include Internet purchasing for the company's e-commerce business. **OS**



Pictured at Best Buy Distribution Center (l to r): Roman Roman Jr., general manager; Jackie Rohosky, assistant commissioner, economic development programs, DTAE; Jep Craig, vice president, economic development programs, Heart of Georgia Technical College.