

SENTURY PICKS LAGRANGE, GA., FOR U.S. PLANT

By [Bruce Davis, Special Projects Reporter](#)



LAGRANGE, Ga. (Sept. 8, 2016) — China's Qingdao Sentury Tire Co. Ltd. has selected LaGrange in southwest Georgia as the site for a \$530 million car and light truck tire plant it expects to have in operation by 2018, according to Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal.

The plant, which Sentury indicated last year it [intended to build](#), will create more than 1,000 jobs and be capable of producing 12 million car and light truck tires a year at full capacity, according to Sentury Tire Executive Vice President Rami Helminen, who cited Georgia's education systems and high quality workforce as reasons for his company's selecting LaGrange for the plant.

"We are confident that Georgia has the infrastructure that can help us build a successful logistical operation to supply our growing aftermarket dealer sales and OEM sales to auto manufacturers in the North American market," Mr. Helminen said.

Sentury plans to incorporate a research and development center into the plant that will employ approximately 100 qualified technical personnel, Mr. Helminen added.

Sentury, represented in the U.S. by [Sentury Tire Americas](#) of Miami, goes to market with three brand names — Delinte, Landsail and Sentury. Sentury Tire Americas operates warehousing in Miami and Memphis, Tenn.

Qingdao Sentury was rated No. 58 on the 2016 *Tire Business* Top 75 list of global tire makers, with fiscal 2015 sales of \$295 million. About 70 percent of Sentury Tire's sales are generated in the North American and European Union markets, the company said.

[LaGrange](#) is a city of about 30,000 inhabitants located about halfway between Atlanta and Montgomery, Ala. It's the county seat of Troup County.

"Sentury Tire's commitment to locate in LaGrange speaks to Georgia's business-friendly climate and the strong relationship we maintain with our economic partners in China," Gov. Deal said.

"We value Sentury Tire's investment in Georgia and the vision of the company's leadership for continued growth in Troup County. I am positive that Georgia's automotive manufacturing and technology capabilities will be assets to Sentury Tire as the company serves a growing customer base."

South Korea's Kia Motors Corp. operates a vehicle assembly plant in nearby West Point, Ga.

The governor's office did not disclose what financial assistance, if any, the state is offering Sentury for the project.

Chris Carr, commissioner of the Georgia Department of Economic Development, said the Sentury project is a "great example of the relationships that have been forged through active communication and engagement in China."

The state of Georgia has had a strategic office in China since 2007 and an office in Qingdao since 2013, helping foster business connections between Georgia and China.

A delegation of Georgia state political and business representatives [visited Sentury](#) in early 2015 at its facilities in China, where they discussed with Sentury executives the possibilities of investing in Georgia. The delegation was led by Chris Carr, the director general of Economic Development Bureau of Georgia State, and Chris Riley, the director of governor office of Georgia State, according to Sentury.

LaGrange Mayor Jim Thornton said Sentury Tire's decision "confirms that LaGrange is one of the best places for international investment in the Southeast."

LaGrange is home to businesses from 10 foreign nations, Mr. Thornton said

http://www.tirebusiness.com/article/20160908/NEWS/160909951#utm_medium=email&utm_source=tb-breakingnews&utm_campaign=tb-breakingnews-20160908