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## Alien employee count falls short of expectations

■ BY JACOB DIRR  
DBJ STAFF REPORTER

Alien Technology is short of employment goals at its Springboro RFID Solutions Center.

The California-based firm, recognized as a leader in the radio frequency industry, employs 12 people in Springboro.

However, in 2005 and 2006, Ohio officials said Alien would create 45 to 60 jobs by February 2009 and spur more radio frequency identification, or RFID, companies to locate to the Dayton region.

Ohio offered at least \$4.6 million in tax breaks, loans and grants from the Ohio Department of Development toward Alien's 22,000-square-foot center in Springboro, which cost \$4.5 million.

Bob Grevey, a spokesperson for the state department, said the only funds Alien used were \$1.8 million from a Third Frontier grant to the Development Research Corp., an offshoot of the Dayton Development Coalition. Because the Third Frontier money is not tax generated, Alien does not have to repay it.

The 2005 grant announcement said the project would "create 100 new jobs within three to five years."

Alien also received a \$500,000 grant from the Springfield-based Turner Foundation and about \$30,000 in property tax breaks granted by Springboro, which expired this year.

Grevey said the department did not know the status of Alien's commitments but would begin to receive annual updates after April, when the Third Frontier project's extended term expires.

Calls placed to Alien's California headquarters were not returned.

Chris Pozzuto, Springboro assistant city manager, said from the city's standpoint, the incentives given were to create jobs. Alien said it would create 82 jobs in five years, and should be up to 60 employees by now, he said.

"Our bread and butter is behind job creation," he said. "And 12 (jobs) falls way short of the 82 pledged."

Chris Pozzuto

However, the abatement expired this year, so there is no penalty for falling short of employment goals.

Robert Zielinski, the center's director of education and services marketing, said the Alien center is not focused on job creation, but educating the public on RFID technology, its applications and usage.

"It was never pitched that there would be that many Alien employees,"

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Jeff Mehrlige, executive director of Camp Kern, stands near building construction at the camp's main location a few year's ago. The camp — part of YMCA of Greater Dayton — has continued growing its main location, but will also open its first satellite camp in Greene County in 2011.

DBJ FILE PHOTO

## Camp Kern grows into Greene County

### Land to be developed into day camp

■ BY MARY BETH LEHMAN  
DBJ STAFF REPORTER

Camp Kern, the long-standing campgrounds in Warren County, will expand into Greene County with its first satellite camp thanks to a 113-acre land donation.

The property on New Burlington Road in Wilmington, which extends through Greene County, will be a day camp for children. The project will also give Camp Kern — part of the YMCA of Greater Dayton — accessibility to kids from Greene County YMCAs, which were acquired by the Dayton YMCA last year.

The project will fit into the YMCAs plan to further expand east, offering more services and options to patrons in that area.

Master planning for the site will begin in February, but camp officials said they expect to choose a development path that causes the least disruption to the natural lay of the land. Unlike Camp Kern, which has a number of cabins, conference spaces, overnight shelters and other amenities, the new camp site will be more suited to day campers, meaning fewer overnight amenities and shelters.

The site, valued at around \$340,000 was donated at the end of 2007. It was used last summer for teen camping trips and overnight from Camp Kern, but throughout 2010 the land will be developed into a day camp and open by the summer of 2011.

"There's not much that will need to be done to convert the land into a day camp," said Jeff Mehrlige, Camp Kern executive director. "It's just how far we want to take it."

Mehrlige said details of the project remain in the planning stages.

The new camp will be called Camp Kern Outpost: Fort Paetz, after the family who donated the land. Mehrlige said 60 acres of the rural farmland is tillable, but the remainder of the land has creeks, ravines and a great wooded area for camp sites.

Camp Kern, located in Oregonia, just finished a capital campaign to celebrate its centennial with a number of improvements, including a 100-acre land purchase to expand in Warren County. It also built new cabin villages, a tree house village, as well as staff and VIP housing.

The goal for phase one of the campaign was \$3.2 million, and the goal for phase two was an additional \$900,000, which would give the camp \$4.1 million. The camp raised \$3.5 million by the end of the target campaign, which was finished in December, but the camp continues to accept donations through the camp's centennial, which is June 2010.

The land in Greene County came in as a donation during the campaign, but money from the campaign will not be used to develop it, Mehrlige said.

The main camp serves more than 33,000 guests a year, most coming from the Dayton and Cincinnati markets, and has a \$2.8 million operating budget.

The outpost's location and proximity to both Dayton and Camp Kern will allow for children to be transported to the site and returned to the YMCAs at the end of each day.

"It's far enough that kids will get a sense that they are really out far there," Mehrlige said. "But it's close enough that we can get them anywhere they need to be in 20 minutes."

The number of day camps in the U.S. has grown by nearly 90 percent in the past 20 years, according to the Martinsville, Ind.-based American Camp Association. Of the estimated 12,000 American camps, 5,000 are day camps, in which guests do not stay overnight. Attendance at day camps rose nationally in 2008, up nearly 50 percent from the previous year, according to the association.

"Family vacations are becoming more cost prohibitive, so I think more parents are seeing the value of a camp experience and spending what disposable income they have on that," said Rich Garbinsky, spokesman for the association.

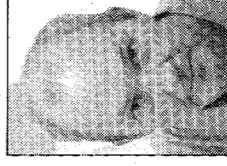
Tim Helm, president and chief executive officer of the Greater Dayton YMCA, said the YMCA would be using the outpost as a chance to provide day camp as an option to more families.

Helm said the addition also would help meet the YMCAs goals to expand into Greene County following the merger. Helm has said the addition of Greene County grew the YMCAs revenue to \$20 million, compared to \$18 million in 2007.

Helm said the YMCA is looking at what to do with the three YMCAs acquired through the merger with Greene County, including locations in Beavercreek, Fairborn and Xenia. Tentative plans include the options to rebuild, tear down or renovate the current YMCAs in the county and a potential plan that would include a \$10 million recreation facility in Bellbrook.

The addition of a second Camp Kern site will further expand the YMCAs influence.

"The camp is about to celebrate its 100-year anniversary," Helm said. "When you have a chance now to develop — on a smaller scale — something that will be there forever, it's pretty exciting."



Tim Helm

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