

GlobalFoundries shows off expanded office building

By Stephen Williams

MALTA — The new administrative building planned at GlobalFoundries will offer room for 450 additional administrative, engineering and research jobs tied to the Fab 8 computer chip plant, company officials said Monday.

The 221,000-square-foot building to be attached to Fab 8 will initially be fitted out for 450 workers — a job count above and beyond the 1,655 manufacturing jobs planned for the chip factory. The building is being designed to someday accommodate up to 1,500 employees.

The company's announcement won praise Monday from U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., who reviewed the plans after touring the busy construction site at the Luther Forest Technology Campus.

"That's going to attract some of the finest researchers and chip-manufacturing people in the world," Schumer said. "There's almost no limit to what can happen here at GlobalFoundries."

It was Schumer's first visit to GlobalFoundries since he participated in the Fab 8 groundbreaking in July 2009.

"This is amazing," Schumer said while standing in a parking lot overlooking Fab 8. "A year and a half ago, this was just forest."

The \$4.6 billion, 1.8-million-square-foot chip plant is now about 75 percent finished, a beehive of activity with trucks passing in and out and cranes towering overhead.

Interior work to prepare for installation of manufacturing tools is now under way, with initial tool arrivals scheduled for June. Testing will start soon afterward, and commercial production is scheduled for late 2012.

A second phase of clean room manufacturing space is already under construction, though the company hasn't made the decision yet to equip it. Equipping the second phase would cost an additional \$2 billion.

Fab 8 has the potential to have a 300,000-square-foot "clean room" manufacturing area, which would be one of the largest in the world.

In return for New York state economic incentives, GlobalFoundries is committed to provide at least 1,205 jobs in Phase I, which would rise to 1,655 jobs if Phase II goes forward as anticipated.

Schumer said those job numbers, and the 450 additional research, engineering and administrative jobs at the new building, show that the state's 2006 decision to provide \$1.3 billion in cash and tax breaks as an incentive to build in Malta was a good one.

"All you have to do is look to see it's worth that money and a whole lot more," Schumer said.

The additional research and manufacturing engineering jobs will be good for the whole region, Schumer said. "When you're doing top-tier technology, you throw off lots of other jobs," he said.

In addition to the permanent manufacturing, research and administrative jobs, there are currently about 1,600 construction jobs on the site. The new administration building should mean 270 more construction jobs.

"To see this giant, giant construction project, the size of six football fields, the biggest construction project currently under way in America, it takes your breath away," Schumer said.

Fab 8 already includes a 223,000-square-foot administration building, which has yet to be occupied. But the projected on-site growth means the company already expects to immediately outgrow it, said Michael Russo, GlobalFoundries' director of government relations.

"This truly is because we don't have capacity in Administrative Building One," Russo. "It makes more sense to build rather than rent."

The 450 jobs is an estimate, Russo said, but the building needs to be ready for whatever number is hired. "We have to be ahead of it. We can't wait," he said.

The new building, which Russo estimated will cost between \$20 million and \$30 million, will be a three-story L-shaped structure attached to the southeast corner of the first administration building. It will about the same size, with similar modern steel-and-glass architecture.

Company officials plan to design the new building to the LEED environmental impact and energy efficiency standards of the U.S. Green Buildings Council.

No new state economic incentives are being sought in return for building the new building, but Russo said the company will apply for any available industrial development agency tax exemptions.

GlobalFoundries filed a site plan approval application for the new building with the Malta Planning Department on Friday, and hopes for Planning Board approval in April. Groundbreaking is scheduled for May, with the goal of finishing the building by August 2012.

Russo said some people may be moved to the new building from the rented GlobalFoundries offices in the Saratoga Technology and Energy Park, where about 300 people now work.

"We're really maxed out," Russo said, adding it hasn't been decided whether GlobalFoundries will continue to rent space at the STEP building, where it also has a manufacturing technology research laboratory.

He couldn't say exactly where GlobalFoundries is in the process of building its workforce to the 1,200 it will need next year.

"They're hiring as fast as they can," Russo said. "This coming year will be an enormous year for hiring for GlobalFoundries."

The 223-acre GlobalFoundries site is approved for construction of up to three computer chip plants, though GlobalFoundries is so far only committed to the first.