

---

January 6, 2010

Contact: Eric Basinger, Executive Director, Economic Development Council, (941) 748-4842, ext. 128, [ericb@ManateeEDC.com](mailto:ericb@ManateeEDC.com)  
Don Zirkelbach, President, Ameritex Fabric Systems, (941) 747-1900, ext. 224, [dzirkelbach@ameritexfabrics.com](mailto:dzirkelbach@ameritexfabrics.com)

## **Marriage of marine manufacturers spins off new green jobs with electric cars**

*Bradenton, FL* – The marriage of once fierce competitors in the marine industry is spinning off a welcome benefit in Manatee County: new manufacturing jobs with a green twist. Bradenton-based Ameritex Fabric Systems, which became a division of the Taylor Made Group in 2009, will supply canvas doors for Chrysler Group Global Electric Motorcars LLC, according to Don Zirkelbach, Ameritex president.

“Our relationship with Global Electric Motorcars is part of our plan to diversify at least 25 percent of our business beyond the marine industry,” said Zirkelbach, whose company has 58 employees and plans to add 10 to 20 manufacturing jobs in the next year. “The combination of Taylor Made and Ameritex with our numerous patents opens up tremendous opportunities.”

The global recession hit the marine industry hard, leading to job losses and plant closures across the industry, including in Manatee County. The entire industry “had to hit the reset button” and create new business models and ways of doing business, Zirkelbach said. In the case of Ameritex and Taylor Made, Ameritex moved into part of a Taylor Made facility and is focusing on fabric-related products while Taylor Made will concentrate on windshield design and manufacturing, he said. Taylor Made recently closed a fabric plant in Georgia and integrated the operation into Ameritex in Bradenton, bringing additional jobs to Manatee County.

The electric car industry is one diversity target for Ameritex. Global Electric Motorcars makes six different models of battery-powered GEM cars primarily suited for intra-city use. GEM cars are used by local, state and national government agencies, resorts, master-planned communities, universities, medical and corporate campuses, as well as by sports teams, taxi-shuttle services and individual consumers. Ameritex is also looking at the resort, consumer, recreational vehicle and golf cart industries.

“The Ameritex story exemplifies how companies in the marine industry are restructuring to survive and thrive,” said Eric Basinger, executive director of the [Economic Development Council](#) (EDC), a division of the Manatee Chamber of Commerce. The EDC has assisted Ameritex over the years with employee recruitment and facilities permitting. “The focus on diversifying into other industries, in addition to marine products, is generating new jobs for local residents.”

### **About the EDC**

The Economic Development Council, a division of the Manatee Chamber of Commerce, is the sole organization responsible for developing and implementing programs designed to attract new high-impact businesses and to assist in the retention and growth of targeted existing businesses in Manatee County. Information: [www.ManateeEDC.com](http://www.ManateeEDC.com).

###