

## State dangles incentive to lure eBay jobs

Economic development » Online auctioneer could expand operations in Draper.

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Utah has offered online auction giant eBay an incentive worth as much as \$1.7 million to entice the company to add up to 200 customer-service jobs in Draper.

The state hopes to capitalize on eBay's plans to close a 700-employee facility in Vancouver, British Columbia, and redistribute the work elsewhere.

If the company does take the incentive offer and expand in Utah, CEO John Donahoe said the state stands to get as many as 200 positions by the end of the year. He said all or nearly all of those positions probably will be local hires.

Since opening a customer-service location in Utah in 1999 with 200 workers, eBay has grown to a 1,100-employee operation in Draper.

"We've always found Utah to be a very business-friendly environment," he said. "We're pleased by the action today and we'll making the decision shortly," referring to the offer approved by the Governor's Office of Economic Development board.

Even if it decides not to add jobs in Draper, eBay already has another Utah expansion in the works. Last fall, the San Jose, Calif.-based company announced it would build a \$334 million computer center in South Jordan in the Daybreak Commerce Park, a 250-acre, light-industrial development at 6801 W. Old Bingham Highway. Set to open in 2010, the facility would employ 50 people.

Donahoe said Utah's labor pool has suited the company well, adding that eBay has no trouble finding good employees here, which has kept turnover low.

In granting approval of the incentive Thursday, state officials said the company must pay employees at least 25 percent more than Salt Lake County's average wage. According to documents filed by eBay, the company would pay an average wage of \$52,000, which would be 27 percent higher than the county's average. The incentive will be payable in the form of a tax credit.

The online auctioneer is in the process of reorganizing its global customer-service network. Part of that involves closing its Vancouver facility by the end of September.

With the closure, Utah will serve as headquarters for eBay's North American customer-service operations, Donahoe said.

In addition to the incentive offer made Thursday, eBay has been offered an incentive worth \$27.3 million to build the South Jordan facility. The latter will help run eBay's Internet commerce sites, eBay.com, PayPal, Skype and shopping.com, among others.

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The state offered Verisys Corp. an incentive worth \$835,000 to encourage it to move its headquarters from Virginia to Utah. The information technology company, which has yet to make a decision, could create as many as 100 positions in the Salt Lake area over the next seven years.

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