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SUMMARY

## BUSINESS

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# Used car dealer expands to South

## Auction Direct plans to open sites in Fla., N.C.

**DEBORAH ALEXANDER**  
STAFF WRITER

Auction Direct USA of Victor will use a \$9.8 million investment to expand its used vehicle superstore format into the Southeast, creating up to 1,500 jobs.

Chief Executive Officer John Iannone said the company plans to open 15 to 20 locations, creating between 75 to 100 new jobs in each market over the next three years.

Trillium Group and New York State Common Retirement Fund announced Monday that they will invest \$9.8 million into the used-vehicle dealership.

Trillium Group is a venture capital private equity company based in Rochester that specializes in startup, early stage and high-growth investments.

Iannone said the company recently opened a 40,000-square-foot location in Morrow, Ga., south of Atlanta, hiring 75 workers. The Atlanta area was selected because of the population growth and direct flights from the area to Rochester.

"We're trying to see how

this (the concept) works in a major market," he said.

Iannone said the company is also looking at locations in Raleigh, N.C., and Jacksonville, Fla., as well as opportunities in Rochester and western New York.

"We're really excited about the response to our Victor location," he said. "We've had a lot of support in the market."

The company employs about 135 workers at its Victor and Morrow, Ga., locations.

Trillium general partner Chris O'Donnell said in a statement that Auction Direct is tapping into the country's third largest retail category — the sale of pre-owned vehicles.

Auction Direct was founded in 2005 and uses a public auction format and e-commerce, concepts similar to those of eBay.

Customers are able to choose from a large selection of pre-owned cars, trucks and vans and purchase at the low auction reserve prices, plus a flat \$399 fee. □

DALEXAND@DemocratandChronicle.com