

Branstad tours Relco plant

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It was actually a fairly small gathering of people surrounding Gov. Terry Branstad Thursday. The governor was keeping a promise he had made earlier in the fall to visit Relco locomotives in Albia but scheduling conflicts disrupted.

No longer campaigning after accepting the appointment by President-elect Donald Trump to become ambassador to China, Brandstad was still very much engaged in the upcoming Iowa legislative session and asked Relco President Mark Bachman and his management team all sorts of questions about rebuilding railroad engines as well as what the state could do to make it easier to do business in Iowa.

Tax reform, regulation and building a reliable work force were probably at the top of Bachman's list, but hearing the Relco CEO talk about how happy they were to have moved from the Chicago area to rural Monroe County was music to the governor's ears.

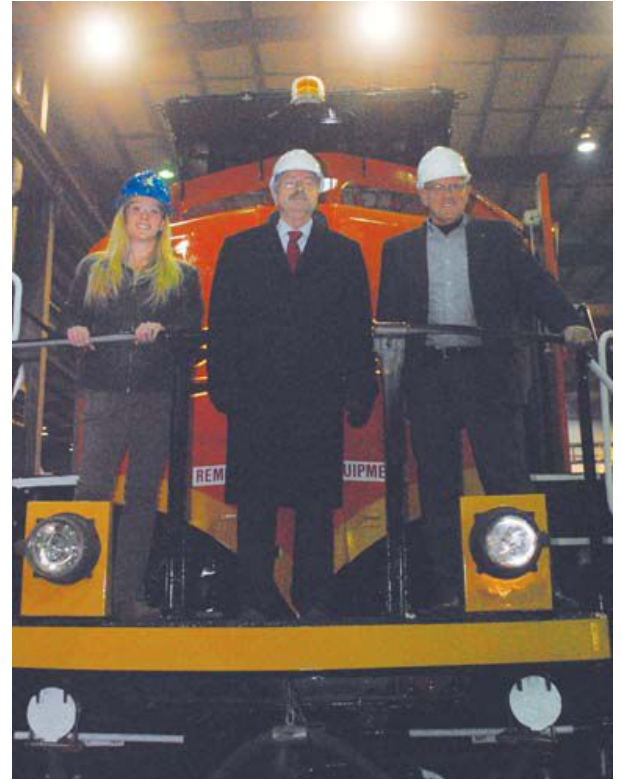
The plant that relocated to Albia in 2006 now employs 150 people seven days a week. They will rebuild up to 250 locomotives each year, some virtually from the ground up.

Bachman talked to the governor about teaming up with Indian Hills Community College and the Albia Community High School's career academy to help create a specialized work force (fabricating, diesel mechanics, paint and electrical) to do the work of locomotive rebuilding.

The governor toured most of the plant, climbing aboard one of the rebuilt engines for a picture and then climbing on a catwalk to get a view of what workers see every day.

After the tour, Bachman and his team went back to the company's board room and had a wide-ranging discussion about Branstad's future and the future of the state under Republican control.

See this full news story in the Tuesday, December 20th issue of the Monroe County News.



Governor Branstad

GOV. TERRY BRANSTAD, in his 99th visit to an Iowa county and likely one of his last as governor, is pictured standing on the front of a Relco locomotive with Chelsea Bachman and Sen. Ken Rozenboom of Oskaloosa.