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SC battery cell project seeking 3rd round of state funds as it ups jobs, investment promises



Gov. Henry McMaster, center right, and state Commerce Secretary Harry Lightsey, right, attended a groundbreaking ceremony Wednesday, June 7, 2023 in Florence for Japan-headquartered AESC's proposed battery cell plant. (Provided by Florence County Economic Development.)

BY: JESSICA HOLDMAN - MARCH 20, 2024 7:39 PM

FLORENCE — An electric vehicle battery cell maker is negotiating for a third round of state funding as it once again vows to expand before ever beginning operations of its Pee Dee area plant.

A panel of legislators gave initial approval Wednesday to an additional \$111 million in state funding related to a battery cell plant being developed by Japan-

headquartered Envision Automotive Energy Supply Co.

The extra money will pay for site grading, water and road improvements, expansion of a state-run workforce training center and purchase of a warehouse building owned by Florence County. This is in addition to \$121 million in state money already approved, nearly doubling the state's commitment.

In exchange, the company and its affiliates are expected to employ more than 2,000 people and invest

more than \$2 billion in the plant located in an 870-acre industrial park in northeast Florence.

Production is supposed to start in 2026.

State Commerce Department and Florence County Economic Development officials declined to comment on the deal, known only as "Project Agave." While state officials did not explicitly name Envision during the meeting Wednesday, documents filed with the Joint Bond Review Commission referenced the past agree-

Kershaw THE NEWS-ERA ATHLETE OF THE WEEK



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Recipes

Brisket is a staple in many Jewish households



Individuals who identify as Jewish have made many contributions to the world, not the least of which are the delicious recipes they've

passed down from generation to generation. While it's hard to characterize Jewish food, certain dishes are particularly popular in many Jewish households.

Brisket recipes are widespread and popular, and many Jewish families have individual methods for preparing brisket. Brisket is sold as a flat brisket, which is lean and trimmed, or a whole brisket that has a top layer of fat that is known as the deckle. The former cooks faster than the latter, but the fat-covered brisket will be more flavorful.

Those interested in trying brisket can try this recipe for "Judith Ginsburg's Brisket" courtesy of "Food, Hope & Resilience: Authentic Recipes and Remarkable Stories from Holocaust Survivors" (American Palate) by June Hersh.

Judith Ginsburg's Brisket
Serves 8

- 1 (5- to 6-pound) brisket
- 1/2 cup kosher salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons paprika
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 1 pound carrots (about 5 to 6), peeled and cut into chunks
- 6 medium onions (about 2 pounds), cut into large chunks
- 8 to 10 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped

- For the sauce
- 1 14.5-ounce can condensed tomato soup
 - 1 cup ketchup
 - 2 tablespoons brown sugar
 - 1 tablespoon white vinegar

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Rub the brisket generously with salt, pepper, paprika, and garlic powder. Place it in a covered roasting pan with the carrots, onions, garlic, and 1/2 cup of water. Cover and roast until fork tender, about 4 hours, checking on the brisket every hour to see if additional water is needed to prevent the meat from scorching.

When the meat is done, remove it from the roasting pan and thinly slice it against the grain. To make the sauce, stir into the pan 1/2 cup water, the can of soup, ketchup, brown sugar, and vinegar. Place the brisket slices back into the sauce. You can heat the sliced beef and sauce and serve at once or let the brisket soak up the big flavors overnight in the fridge. It will be worth the wait.

ments struck.

"The project sponsor and affiliates have now committed, separate and apart from the previously approved project, to create at least 400 additional new jobs and to invest at least an additional \$400 million, all for a second facility for the production of EV batteries to be located adjacent to the previously approved project," an attorney's letter read.

Envision is partnering with BMW to produce battery cells for electric vehicles to be built at the German automaker's Spartanburg facility.

The average wage for workers at the plant will be \$65,000, officials told reporters during the facility's groundbreaking. It could provide

a financial boost to residents, particularly those in more rural surrounding counties that have some of the lowest wages and highest unemployment in the state.

The company first announced in December 2022 it would invest \$810 million to build the Pee Dee facility where it would employ 1,170 people when it reached full capacity.

A year later it increased those numbers to \$1.6 billion and 1,620 workers.

Now, less than three months after its last expansion announcement, it's back with even bigger promises.

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