

Samsung hiring as it moves, expands Austin chip design center

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Samsung Austin Semiconductor, which started its Austin chip engineering design operations just a year ago, is moving that center to Northwest Austin to give it room to grow.

Samsung signed a lease to move its Samsung Austin Research Center from the company's Northeast Austin manufacturing complex to the Ladera Bend office complex at RM 2222 and Jester Boulevard.

Samsung Austin Research Center employs 80 engineers, and it expects to hire an additional 30 this year, Vice President Keith Hawkins said Thursday. The center is expected to move into its new quarters by early July.

Samsung said it is looking for both new college graduates and experienced engineers with a master's degree in electrical or computer engineering to fill openings at the center .

"What started as a nimble team has evolved into a full-fledged Austin-based chip design center," Hawkins said.

The lease is for 30,000 square feet at Ladera Bend, owned by HPI Real Estate Services & Investments .

Samsung established the design center to create low-power system chips derived from basic processing cores created by ARM Holdings, the leading supplier of chip designs for mobile Internet devices.

It works closely with Cambridge, England-based ARM, which has substantial engineering operations in Austin.

Samsung is winding up the installation of equipment for the \$3.6 billion expansion of its Austin chip fabrication plant, which is expected to begin volume manufacturing of advanced logic chips in August.

With the completion of its expanded factory operations, Samsung's Austin employment has grown to 1,965 people, including workers at the design center.

"We are bursting at the seams," spokeswoman Catherine Morse said.

The new chips created by the design center and set for manufacture at the expanded factory are expected to be low-power integrated processors that can run mobile devices, including smartphones and media tablets.

Industry analysts say Samsung's major customer for the Austin chip factory is Apple Inc., which is a leading maker of both smartphones and tablets.

The chipmaker does not comment on its customers.

HPI bought the Ladera Bend complex out of foreclosure in December. Since that time, the 157,000-square-foot complex has gone from 5 percent leased to 55 percent leased, said Richard Paddock, office specialist for HPI. He handled the Samsung lease.

"Leasing activity in Austin has picked up dramatically," Paddock said. "The spigot has been turned on in the last six months."

Samsung isn't the only chip design operation expanding in town.

Altera Corp. said May 5 that it will lease space for a new engineering center in Southwest Austin; it expects to grow to several hundred jobs within a few years.

In December, Intel Corp. bought the former Guaranty Bank headquarters at 1300 S. MoPac Blvd. (Loop 1) for its Austin operations. It paid \$39.8 million to the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. for the property.

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Ladera Bend filling up

The complex was nearly empty when HPI Real Estate Services & Investments bought it in December. Major leases since then:

Spiceworks: 29,000 square feet in Building 3

AllWebLeads: 23,000 square feet in Building 2

Samsung Austin design center: 30,000 square feet in Building 1

Courtesy of JB Goodwin



**New
Samsung
design
center**