



*Buffalo-Based Mobile Computer Manufacturer has Added 65 New Jobs; Expects to Increase Workforce to 100 by 2018*

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*Governor Cuomo Announces Completion of Expansion of Bak USA in Western NY*

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the expansion of the global headquarters of Bak USA, one of the first American firms to produce its own-branded electronic tablets, is complete. When Bak USA opened its doors in 2015, it employed just 15 people at its facility on Buffalo's East Side. Since then, the company has grown to a staff of 80 full-time employees and expects to increase their workforce to 100 employees by 2018. Bak USA works with local agencies and global leaders to build computers for schools, businesses, and government agencies around the world.

"Buffalo has become a leader in high-tech manufacturing and Bak USA's newly completed expansion in the heart of the city means new jobs, more economic activity and more momentum for a region already on the move." **Governor Cuomo said.** "Bak USA's successful expansion in Western New York is yet another example of companies coming to New York and staying here to grow their businesses in our state."

The 10,000-squarefoot expansion, which spans the entire fourth floor of the Compass East building at 425 Michigan Avenue, reflects Bak USA's expanded capabilities and product offerings. The new space will be used as a product workshop that includes product design, engineering, warehousing, assembly, and quality assurance. The design of the space also features hand-built workstations, a floor-to-ceiling glass conference room, and new production tools.

"Bak USA's expanded headquarters is another sign that Buffalo is embracing the 21st century economy as a hub for innovation and technology," **said Lieutenant Governor Hochul.** "It also stands as an

example of Governor Cuomo's overall economic strategy, which is to create jobs by removing barriers for start-ups and leverage new investment through public-private partnerships. As someone who has visited Bak USA and seen first-hand all they have to offer, I am grateful for their commitment to Western New York and excited that they have reached this important milestone."

"Today we are proud to acknowledge all the progress we have made in such a short period of time," **said Bak USA President & Co-founder Ulla Bak.** "A few short years ago, nobody said we could build computers in the United States, and now that we have found a home in Buffalo, we are showing the world that yes, it is possible. And as we continue to grow, we hope that Buffalo and Bak USA will be an example of what manufacturing could look like anywhere else in the world."

Bak USA, a STARTUP-NY company, began training its first employees on December 1, 2014 and now produces three different types of mobile computers: the Atlas 12, a 2-in-1 laptop purpose-built for K-12 schools; the Seal, a rugged mobile tablet for field services; and the Bak Board, the original tablet from Bak USA. All of Bak USA's computers are built in a safe and clean assembly environment overlooking the city's skyline.

To develop the company's new advanced manufacturing processes, Bak USA partnered with Buffalo Manufacturing Works, operated by EWI, and Insyte Consulting companies. BMW, which is part of the Buffalo Billion Investment Development Plan, engages with manufacturers across North America to help them develop and implement cutting-edge manufacturing technologies, enhance productivity, and find other ways to grow their companies.

The collaborative robots, or "cobots," were developed with the help of BMW and will be used to simplify the assembly process for Bak USA builders by eliminating some of the repetitive motion steps that can be physically stressful for humans.

**Buffalo Manufacturing Works CEO Michael Ulbrich said,** "Bak USA is on the leading edge of demonstrating how manufacturers can successfully integrate advanced automation, in this case dual-arm collaborative robots, into their production environment to enhance and grow its workforce. It is an honor to work with a company that is both innovation-centric and community-minded. Bak USA is proving that you can leverage technology to build a thriving manufacturing business in the heart of a city."

**Benjamin Rand, President of Insyte Consulting said,** "The team at Bak USA truly exemplifies how a company can innovate and grow successfully in Western New York. Our team was honored to contribute our facility layout expertise to optimize their new space. This project is a great example of how our partnership with Buffalo Manufacturing Works can support the strategic vision of a manufacturing client."

**Howard Zemsky, Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner said,** "In just two short years, Ulla and J.P. Bak have successfully grown their company from a new start-up to employing dozens of Western New Yorkers, while focusing on creating meaningful opportunities for the typically marginalized members of the community. With support from Governor Cuomo, Bak USA is reaching its goals, building high-tech solutions, and finding success with a loyal and talented local workforce."

**Senator Tim Kennedy said,** "Since anchoring its global headquarters in Buffalo, Bak USA has gone above and beyond to invest not only in our city's manufacturing sector, but in our workforce. JP and Ulla are

key examples of successful business owners taking advantage of START-UP NY's benefits, creating opportunity and establishing a collaborative relationship with the community. With this expansion, I have no doubt that this company will continue to bring good paying jobs to Buffalo's east side, and keep jobs here in Western New York where they belong."

**Assemblywoman Peoples-Stokes said,** "Today highlights the momentum of economic development in the East Side of Buffalo. I commend Bak USA on their socially conscious mission to deliver technology to needed parts of the world while also providing needed local employment opportunities. Today our immigrants, refugees, and disadvantaged residents need to be lifted up and not marginalized. The collaboration of Buffalo Manufacturing Works highlights the successful integrated economic development strategy of Governor Cuomo. I applaud Bak USA on their expansion and future success in the consumer electronics market.

**Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz said,** "Thanks to Bak USA, it's no longer inconceivable that computer tablets can be manufactured in Erie County, or that our local workforce could play such a key role in the rapid growth of the company. The expansion of the Bak USA HQ right here in the City of Buffalo is great news for the entire county and a reaffirmation of what can happen when committed individuals believe in what they are doing and work hard to succeed. I thank and congratulate JP, Ulla, and Christian Bak on the expansion and look forward to many more years of success right here in Erie County for Bak USA."

**Buffalo Mayor Byron Brown said,** "We are grateful that Bak USA chose Buffalo as home to its global headquarters a few years ago and today's expansion announcement is more good news for our City," said Mayor Byron Brown. I thank J.P. and Ulla Bak for our shared commitment to growing Buffalo into a City of opportunity where all people prosper from our City's significant revival. Bak USA supplies affordable mobile technologies to those who need them the most and I thank the company for demonstrating a deep commitment to hiring a diverse workforce and for choosing Buffalo as the best place to further grow its business."

#### **About Bak USA**

Bak USA (pronounced "Back USA") is a social enterprise that builds mobile computers in Buffalo, New York. A grassroots organization with a global reach, we are partnering with local agencies and industry leaders to build accessible technology, empower local communities, and activate social prosperity. Our dream is to make mobile technologies accessible to every human being on earth. Bak USA: Born in Buffalo. Built for the world. Learn more at [www.bakusa.com](http://www.bakusa.com).

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<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-completion-expansion-bak-usa-western-ny>