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## Parata sticks with Durham

By JEFF ZIMMER, The Herald-Sun  
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DURHAM -- Citing state and local incentives, Durham-based Parata Systems announced Thursday it will grow its headquarters in the Bull City instead of moving the company following the acquisition of a business unit of McKesson Corp.

Parata, which makes and sells automated prescription-filling systems, said the acquisition will bring 130 jobs over the next three years to its company's headquarters in Durham's Meridian Park. The number of new jobs could grow to 200 within five years, Parata said.

As part of that growth, the company will invest \$15 million over the next five years in its local operation.

In its Thursday announcement, the company said county and state incentives played a key role in the 5-year-old firm's decision to remain in Durham.

The firm is getting a \$100,000 One North Carolina Fund grant and a \$100,000 incentive package from Durham County. The company qualifies for other state incentives as well.

"Parata was founded in Durham and we attribute the region's robust talent and technical resources as integral to our success," Jess Eberdt, Parata's CEO, said in a release. "The commitment of the governor to retaining growth businesses like Parata certainly played a role in our decision to maintain our commitment here."

The company has about 165 employees at its Durham location and a small number at a manufacturing plant in Youngsville.

The 130 jobs the company will add over the next three years will be at its corporate office, a spokeswoman said.

While wages will vary by job, the average weekly wage for all the jobs will be \$1,300 plus benefits, according to an announcement from the governor's office about Parata's expansion.

The average weekly wage in Durham County is \$659, not including benefits, according to the release.

Durham's gain is another community's loss, with the new jobs coming from the Parata's acquisition of McKesson Automated Prescription Systems, which manufactures high-volume automated prescription machines used for retail pharmacies.

McKesson APS had locations in Alexandria, La., and Pittsburgh, which were the sites Parata was

considering for relocation. Financial terms of the deal, which closed last month, were not disclosed.

Founded in 2001, Parata System's flagship product is the Parata RDS, or robotic dispensing system, used in some retail pharmacies. The company says the unit counts up to 30 tablets per second to accurately process up to 154 prescriptions an hour. The machine's drug-to-vial accuracy is 100 percent, the company says.

About 60 percent of Parata's customers purchase the Parata RDS, which costs about \$200,000 for a standard model. The rest lease the robot for \$3,800 to \$4,500 a month.

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