

Ford Invests \$400 Million In Factory

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH
Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) – Ford announced last week that it will retain nearly 3,750 jobs and spend about \$400 million to upgrade a Missouri plant that had been in danger of closing.

Ziad Ojakli, Ford Motor Co.'s group vice president for government affairs, provided no details about which new product will be produced at the Claycomo plant near Kansas City or when an announcement will be made.

Ford is ending production of the Escape sport utility vehicle later this year at the plant. It will make the new Escape in Louisville, Kentucky. The plant will continue to make the Ford F-150 on a separate line.

Ojakli also declined to say when the company would begin investing money in the Claycomo plant and whether there would be job losses during the transition.

Despite the unanswered questions, cheering workers packed a Ford dealership to listen to the announcement from Ojakli and Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon. The Claycomo plant was in danger of closing before lawmakers approved a tax break last fall aimed at enticing Ford to continue making vehicles at the plant.

The bill will let manufacturers keep employee withholding taxes they normally would pay Missouri if they improve their factories for new or expanded

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Ford's senior executive management team with the C-MAX Energi (left) and Focus Electric vehicles onstage at the Detroit auto show.

Focus Electric Brings Meaning to Green

DEARBORN – The environmentally friendly reach of the Ford Focus Electric goes beyond its zero-emissions motor. Focus Electric combines recycled and renewable materials, green technologies and innovative manufacturing processes to make the car green from bumper to bumper.

"An electric vehicle is already considered a green vehicle, but Ford wanted to go a step further by looking at ways to make the materials inside the Focus Electric more eco-friendly as well," said Carrie Majeske, product sustainability manager, Ford Motor Company.

"Using recycled or renewable materials in lieu of petroleum-based materials allows Ford to minimize the amount of virgin materials used in the Focus Electric."

The Focus Electric is not only green in areas where cus-

tomers expect it to be, but also in places they might not, like in the seat cushions. Soy-based foams, which are used on more than 20 Ford vehicles, will be used in Focus Electric, with seat cushions shaped from 8 percent soy-based content.

A material called Lignotock also is used behind the cloth on the door. Derived from 85 percent wood fibers, this lighter application results in a weight reduction and provides better sound-deadening benefits compared to conven-

tional glass-reinforced thermal plastics.

"One of the more impactful things we are doing is finding a way to increase the use of recycled materials in resins. We have a strategy that specifies the use of a large quantity of post-consumer recycled material in a range of plastic applications," said Majeske.

"Pop bottles and milk jugs eventually become part of components like underbody shields, wheel arch liners and air cleaner assemblies."

By using more recycled

content in resins, Ford can further reduce the amount of oil-based plastics in vehicles. This also cuts down on overall oil consumption. Applications of the post-consumer plastics also include carpets, roof lining and replacement bumpers.

Ford, Detroit Edison and Xtreme Power are teaming up to establish one of Michigan's largest solar power generation systems and electric vehicle charging stations at Michigan

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Ford EVs' Test Drives Prove Popular with the Public

by Gerald Scott
Editor
U.S. Auto Scene

One of the advantages of Ford's big two-story pavilion at the Detroit auto show this year was that it gave the Dearborn automaker the ability to offer test rides.

That is, Ford actually built a small, elevated circular road track that it used to offer rides in a couple of Ford EVs – the 2012 Focus Electric and the 2011 Ford Transit Connect utility van.

Not to be confused with the larger, overall ride opportunity in the basement of Cobo Center, Ford's pavilion offered both media visitors and the public test rides in the above two vehicles and it turned out to be a very popular offering indeed.

This activity was ride-only for the media and public and the driving was done by a professional Ford driver.

"The only difference between this (Focus Battery) and the Transit Connect is the range – this goes 80 to 100 miles per charge while the Transit Connect comes in around 80," said the driver

chaperoning media on the first press day of the 2011 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS).

Mind you, the drives are done at safe speeds of less than 3 mph or so, but for

many, especially the public visitors, this was the first such opportunity to actually go for a ride in a mainstream electric vehicle (EV).

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Former Ford Vice Chair Becomes WSU President

by Gerald Scott
Editor
U.S. Auto Scene

Wayne State's search for a permanent president was a relatively easy one – all they had to do was look in the chair of the former Ford automotive executive currently holding the office on an interim basis.

And find Allan Gilmour they did, so to speak.

Wayne State announced last week that its Board of Governors has ended its search for a permanent president and has unanimously elected Allan Gilmour to serve as the 11th president of Wayne State University, effective immediately.

Gilmour began his tenure as interim president on Aug. 30, 2010, and will continue as president through the 2012-2013 academic year.

Gilmour, a graduate of Harvard University and the University of Michigan, is best known for his earlier career at Ford Motor Co., from which he retired in 1995 as vice chairman.

He rejoined the auto company as vice chairman in 2002, and retired again in 2005, having overseen Finance, the General Auditor's office, Human Resources, Corporate Affairs and Corporate Strategy.

He also led Ford's financial services sector – Ford Motor Credit and Hertz Corp. "I've said before that higher education is a great calling," Gilmour said. "These five months at Wayne State have been energizing and challenging. I am delighted to continue in the role of president, and honored by the confidence the Board has expressed in me."

Gilmour currently serves on the boards of directors of DTE Energy Co., Business Leaders for Michigan, and Downtown Detroit Partnership. Previously, he was a member of the boards of Ford Motor Co., US West, Me-



Allan Gilmour

diaOne Group, Prudential Financial, Dow Chemical, Whirlpool and Universal Technical Institute.

He is also chairman of Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan and a trustee of Citizens Research Council.

"He is an active leader," said Gov. Tina Abbott, vice chair of the Board. "He is a problem-solver and making a difference."

Governor Paul Massaron, who chaired WSU's Presidential Search Committee, agreed, adding, "Wayne State needs a president of Allan's stature; he knows how to lead."

Acknowledging that the search for a permanent president was still in the early stages when the decision was made, Massaron added, "The committee has done a lot of prep work, but we had not yet begun to interview candidates. At some point, we realized we've already found the right person to be president – and he's right here."

Gilmour's long-term leadership will come in handy as Wayne State faces big challenges, including the State of Michigan's \$1.8 billion budget deficit – educational funding from Lansing for the Detroit university could be in question, same as how much state support will benefit the University of Michigan and Michigan State University is still in question.



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

The Ford Test Track at the Detroit auto show featured a Focus Battery Electric that gave media and public visitors test rides. It was particularly popular during the public run of the show.

Charity Preview Raises \$2.6M for Kids

That sigh of relief you're hearing right now is coming from the organizers of the 2011 NAIAS Charity Preview, which reported a successful evening on Jan. 14.

That's all because the 2011 North American International Auto Show Charity Preview black-tie gala continues to be one of the top single-night fund-raising events in the na-

tion as nearly 10,500 guests helped to raise \$2.6 million this year to benefit local children's charities.

"Our passion as the Motor City transcends a love of

cars," said NAIAS Chairman Barron Meade.

"The automotive community and the city band together each year during the NAIAS Charity Preview for the greater good of our future, and that is our children.

"Thousands of children benefit from this event as a result of that sense of community."

Also, support by various sponsors allows for a great social event for attendees, and as a result, the maximum benefit for children in the metro area.

The sponsors of the 2011 NAIAS Charity Preview included RBS/Charter One, marking its fourth year of support; Delta Airlines, Comcast and MGM Grand Detroit – sponsors of the VIP Ribbon Cutting Party; and Art Van Furniture, which provided special additional support.

Meanwhile, Charity Preview attendees had the special opportunity to enjoy cutting-edge concept and production vehicles up close on the showroom floor while enjoying a perennial Motor City musical favorite in The Rockets.

Since its inception back in 1976, Charity Preview has raised nearly \$82 million for various children's charities in metro Detroit, over \$37 million of which was raised in the

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Ford CEO Alan Mulally, left, greets GM CEO Dan Akerson at the Charity Preview reception at Cobo Center the night before the Detroit auto show opened to the public.