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Ford CEO Jim Hackett, Argo AI CEO Bryan Salesky and Volkswagen CEO Dr. Herbert Diess are developing AI technology for the future.

Ford, VW Partnership With Argo to Develop AI Tech

Despite world events, a col- both Ford and Volkswagen to laboration between Ford Motor Company and Volkswagen to develop AI technology remains on track and will be a positive development for everyone involved, said John Lawler, CEO of Ford Autonomous Vehicles and Ford Motor Company vice president of Mobility Partnerships.

Lawler recently wrote an article about the company's relationship with Volkswagen and how they're working together. In the article, Lawler noted that last July, Ford and Volkswagen announced a collaboration with Argo AI to introduce autonomous vehicle technology in the U.S. and Europe.

As part of this collaboration, Volkswagen would join Ford in investing in Argo AI. Working together with Argo AI positions

better serve our future customers while improving cost and capital efficiencies, Lawler said.

In his article, he wrote, "As a result, Volkswagen's investment in Argo AI was finalized June 1. In my previous role as vice president of Ford Corporate Strategy, I can tell you firsthand the moment our teams started talking, all three parties could see the value of working together. Here's what we saw and why we believe it works for everyone involved - including our future customers.

"This deal is important to both companies for a variety of reasons. First, there are shared development costs.

"At Ford, we believe self-

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Barra Speaks Out Against Intolerance

GM CEO Mary Barra and the Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony, president of the Detroit chapter of the NAACP, Mike Duggan, mayor of Detroit, and the CEOs of eight Detroit companies spoke at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center against racism and injustice and commit to action and change.

In her June 3 address, Barra said in the end of May she wrote "a letter to the General Motors team. In it, I shared my thoughts about what's happening in the world today. I received hundreds of responses from employees many with words of support: clusion – that means creating the some with words of skepticism conditions where every single huabout whether things will really change; and others still with personal stories of how racism has impacted their lives. As a mom of two, these stories broke my heart. the resources and the rigor to en-

"At GM, we aspire to be the most inclusive company in the world. And our hope is that every company will do the same. And while there may not be a precise roadmap for how that will happen, that is no excuse not to try. Inclusion will be a north star for us. And every day, we will take steps in service of our aspiration. That is why I am proud to be here today.' She told the audience that GM

aspires to be the most inclusive company in the world.

To that end, "We commit to in-

sure that they do. We know we're not perfect. Pretending to be is part of the problem. To any GM employees who have the courage to speak up - we will hear you.

"We unequivocally condemn intolerance - that means racism, bigotry, discrimination and any other form of named or unnamed hatred. Where hatred exists within our house, we will root it out. To any GM employees who feel like they cannot bring their full selves to work – we will see you.

"We stand up against injustice that means taking the risk of ex-



man who believes in inclusion is welcome within our walls.

"Where those conditions do not currently exist, we will bring forth

pressing an unpopular or polarizing point of view, because complacency and complicity sit in the shadow of silence. To any GM employees who feel like we should leverage GM's voice – we will speak out."

Barra spoke at a press conference of corporate leaders speaking out against racism and injustice at City Hall in Detroit.

FCA Manufacturing Almost Back to Full Capacity

FCA efforts to get its manufacturing facilities in North America up and running in the face of the continued COVID-19 crisis have been productive.

According to statistics released by the company on June 3, approximately 85 percent (28,300 out of 33,350) of its manufacturing employees in the United States have returned to work, said FCA spokeswoman Jodi Tinson.

In Canada, 99 percent, or 7,785 out of 7,890, of the company's manufacturing employees have returned to work.

In Mexico, the figures are 88

percent, or 12,050 out of 13,700.

Overall, a total of 48,145 out of 54.940 manufacturing employees have returned to work, Tinson said. That is about 88 percent of the company's total North American manufacturing workforce.

Tinson said that different facilities are running at different levels of production. For example, the Jefferson North Assembly Plant in Detroit first started production with one shift on May 18. By May 26, the plant was running with two shifts and by June 1, three shifts.

Sterling Heights Assembly

started off with one shift on May 18 and was up to three shifts by June 1. as well. Tinson said.

The company's Toledo Assembly Complex in Ohio started off with one shift on May 18 and was up to two shift by June 1, according to Tinson. Warren Truck Assembly also started production on May 18 and was up to two shifts by June 1.

Tinson said the company's Belvidere Assembly plant in Illinois started production with one shift on June 1, and plans are to have two shifts up and running by June 15.

in Ontario, Canada was up to two shifts as of May 25, and the Windsor Assembly Plant was up to three shifts by June 1, Tinson said.

The company's Saltillo Truck Assembly Plant in Mexico started production on May 25 and is expected to have three shifts running by June 8.

Van Assembly Saltillo The Plant in Mexico started production on May 25 and had two shifts running by June 1. The Toluca Assembly Plant in Mexico started production on May 26,

The Brampton Assembly Plant and will have two shifts working by June 8.

In order to get these facilities up and running, FCA launched a series of health and safety protocols to protect employees, Tinson said.

They included cleaning, disinfecting and social distancing, but most importantly, ensuring the wellness of everyone entering an FCA facility.

With that in mind, Tinson said the the company requires its employees, as well as all visitors, to

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VW Completes Its Argo AI Investment With Ford to Develop New Technology

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driving technology can make people's lives easier and provide new and more efficient mobility solutions for our congested cities

"Building a safe, scalable and trusted self-driving service, however, is no small task. It's also not a cheap one. We've committed to spending more than \$4 billion through 2023 on the development of our self-driving service.'

A large part of this investment is dedicated to developing the self-driving system. With Volkswagen's investment in Argo AI, the two companies will now share the cost of developing Argo AI's technology.

The deal also gives Ford and VW scale and reach, Lawler wrote.

In addition to shared development costs, the deal with Volkswagen makes Argo AI's self-driving software the first with commercial deployment plans for both Europe and the U.S. Because it can tap into both automakers' global reach, Argo AI's platform has the largest geographic deployment potential of any autonomous driving technology to date.

Scale and geographic reach are important factors in developing a self-driving system that is robust and cost-efficient.

While our companies are sharing Argo AI's technology development costs, Ford will remain independent and fiercely competitive in building its own service," Lawler self-driving wrote. "Sharing the development costs with Volkswagen doesn't mean Ford is reducing its overall spend in the autonomous vehicle space.

"Instead, we are reallocating

the money toward our unique customer experience, including transportation as a service software development and fleet operations. We believe building the best overall customer experience will help differentiate us from our competitors in the selfdriving space."

Investing in and creating the right customer experience, said Lawler, is even more important now as the COVID-19 virus has impacted everything – from the way we work to how people shop

"At Ford," Lawler wrote. "we believe a change in customer behavior, whether permanent or temporary, is something we must fully understand as we build a self-driving service. Now is the time for us to be thoughtful about the service we are building so it can remain relevant in a changing world and offer customers peace of mind knowing they, or their packages, are in a safe and protected environment inside our vehicles.

"We've said before, but it bears repeating: There are several important parts to developing a great self-driving service including the self-driving software, vehicle development, fleet operations and the customer experience. To be successful in this space, a company needs to look at every aspect of the business. It's not about being first. It's about providing value to our customers, making people's lives easier and offering cities new and improved mobility solutions.

Lawler said that has been Ford's mission from the start. Now, with Volkswagen's investment in Argo AI complete, the company can spend even more time and care ensuring Ford remains true to its goal.



A weld curtain hangs between two operators working on the underbody of a Dodge Grand Caravan at FCA's Windsor (Ontario) Assembly Plant. The barrier helps protect employees from the spread and transmission of COVID-19.

FCA Has Gotten Its Plants Up & Running

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

complete a Daily Health Risk Assessment, which consists of taking their temperature less than two hours before reporting to work or visiting the site with either a company-provided temperature strip or personal thermometer as well as completing a self-screening questionnaire and turning it in upon entry.

As an added measure of safety, the company has installed thermal imaging cameras to verify what employees and visitors have self-reported, Tinson said.

Consistent with the direction of governmental agencies, employees will be required to wear company-provided masks and safety glasses at all times when in the facility. Employees will al-

safety glasses when applying or cleaning with disinfectant spray. Visitors and contractors to any FCA facility will be required to provide their own personal protection equipment for entry.

During the production pause, FCA completed a significant number of cleaning and social distancing activities to prepare its facilities for when operations resume. These included cleaning and disinfecting more than 57 million square feet of manufacturing floor space, as well as enhanced cleaning and disinfecting schedules developed for common and high-traffic areas, including turnstiles, restrooms, cafeterias, locker rooms and conference rooms.

FCA also provided cleaning supplies at all workstations so surfaces can be cleaned and disinfected, installed more than 2,000 hand sanitizer stations across all facilities and performs daily audits to be conducted to ensure new standards are followed. Tinson said.

To make sure it was safe, more than 17,000 workstations were

so be asked to wear gloves and analyzed and evaluated for adherence to six-foot social distancing guidelines and more than 4,700 job areas and workstations redesigned or protective barriers installed to allow for more social distancing, Tinson said.

> FCA also installed plexiglass partitions and created visual management guides for social distancing in break areas and cafeterias, as well as throughout all buildings. The automaker also staggered start times and added time to breaks and lunch to minimize large gatherings.

> Upon the restart of production, FCA has adopted a new level of daily cleaning and disinfecting - in accordance with WHO, CDC and OSHA recommendations - at all manufacturing locations in order to maintain the enhanced levels of cleanliness and sanitation.

In addition to increasing the number of times per shift that high-traffic, high-use areas, as well as common touchpoints, are cleaned and disinfected, 10 minutes per shift are dedicated to cleaning and disinfecting employee workstations, Tinson said.





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Charles Muse, Autonomous Engineering manager at GM guides children through a 3-D drawing activity via GM's new STEM education series.

GM Has Net STEM Classes

If kids can't study STEM subjects at school, then GM will just have to bring STEM learning to where children are today - on the Internet.

General Motors is lending support to schools by releasing Electrifying Engineering, a free educational video series designed to foster ingenuity through handson activities, while educating kids about electric vehicle technology, said GM spokeswoman Maureen Bender.

So while schools may be winding down the remote-learning programs put into place during the COVID-19 pandemic, parents, teachers and students everywhere are seeking new ways to keep minds active and inspired outside the classroom

during the summer months, Bender said.

Electrifying Engineering episodes will be released on YouTube every Sunday through July 2020. Episodes are hosted by different members of the GM team and touch on a wide range of topics, including electric car charging, electric car motors, autonomous vehicle sensors and more.

Episodes will feature an interactive engineering project designed for viewers to conduct in the comfort of their own homes, with everyday household items.

When the project is complete, viewers are encouraged to share a picture on social media using the hashtag #ElectrifyingEngineering.

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DETROIT AUTOMOTIVE MANUFACTURING AND TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRIES

China Could See Different World After COVID-19

A lot of things are going on around the world that will affect the way the auto industry does business

Besides the COVID-19 outbreak, there has been civil unrest in Hong Kong and the Japanese government is urging Japanese businesses to depend less on China for goods and services.

The Associated Press reported in late May that the ruling Communist Party said the U.S. moving to end some trading privileges for Hong Kong "grossly interfere" in China's internal affairs and are "doomed to fail."

The newspaper, People's Daily, was responding to an announcement from President Donald Trump in late May. The announcement came after China's ceremonial parliament – bypassing Hong Kong's local legislature – ad-vanced legislation that could severely curtail free speech and opposition political activities in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

It was the "firm determination of all Chinese people" to oppose interference in Hong Kong affairs by any external forces, the paper said.

"This hegemonic act of attempting to interfere in Hong Kong affairs and grossly interfere in China's internal affairs will not frighten the Chinese people and is doomed to fail," it said. Attempts at "forcing China to make concessions on core interests including sovereignty and security through blackmailing or coercion ... can



The post-COVID-19 global automotive supply chain could be radically different with Detroit OEMs depending more on local suppliers such as Lear Automotive of Southfield to supply parts for vehicles made in Michigan.

only be wishful thinking and daydreaming!'

China has threatened to retaliate over the U.S. move to cancel trading advantages granted to Hong Kong after its handover from British to Chinese rule in 1997.

Tensions over Hong Kong have increased over the past year as China has cracked down on protesters and strengthened its control over the Asian financial hub.

Trump said the administration would begin eliminating the "full range" of agreements that had given Hong Kong a relationship with the U.S. that mainland China lacked, including exemptions from controls on certain exports. "China has replaced its promised formula of one country, two systems, with one country, one system," he said.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo notified Congress last week that Hong Kong is no longer deserving of the preferential trade and commercial status it has enjoyed from the U.S.

AP reported that it's not yet clear what impact the decision will have on U.S. companies that operate in Hong Kong, or on the city's position as Asia's major financial hub. Beijing has yet to give details on what specific measures it will take in response, although the People's Daily editorial said China was prepared to make a "resolute counterattack and what awaits you can only be a shameful failure.

China passed the Hong Kong national security law after stiff public opposition destroyed a previous attempt by the territory's legislature to pass such legislation in 2003

AP reported that Beijing's resolve appeared to have been hardened by months of anti-government protests in Hong Kong that frequently led to violent confrontations between police and the largely youthful demonstrators. China repeatedly accused foreign governments and international organizations of fueling the demonstrations, while showing no direct evidence.

Businesses face multiple unanswered questions about the unraveling of the special trading relationship and it "won't be like flip-ping a switch," Joseph said.

But that's not all that is going on with China. In May, journalist Mercy Kuo reported on a \$2.2 billion stimulus package by the Japanese government to help Japanese companies move production out of China. The article appeared in the Web site, the diplomat.com.

She wrote that there "are two immediate reasons to reduce supply chain dependence on China. One is that many Japanese firms have 'bet on China' and depend exclusively on Chinese factories and firms to provide critically important goods. COVID-19 highlighted the risk of making China a single point-of-failure in Japan's global and regional supply chains.

"The lesson is that Japanese firms must expect disruption, diversify risk, and design redundancy into supply chains, especially for products critically important to Japan's stability and security.

"The other reason is that actual reshoring of strategically indispensable Japanese production not just 'China +1' supply chain management - is a key aspect of Abe's plan."

Journalists Salim Shaikh and Ehap Sabri wrote an article that appeared on May 11 in the Industry Week Web site titled, "How COVID-19 is Transforming Automotive and Industrial Supply Chains.

In it, they wrote that after "the recent geopolitical events such as Brexit, U.S.-China trade relations, tariffs, renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations are increasingly looking at building supply chain resiliency. Developing supply chain resiliency includes revisiting the supply chain network design and reconfiguring global and regional supply chain flows, sourcing critical components from local suppliers and conducting trade-offs according to needs.



OEMs Face Challenges Starting Production

DETROIT (AP) – The U.S. auto industry's coronavirus comeback plan was pretty simple: restart factories gradually and push out trucks and other vehicles for waiting buyers in states left largely untouched by the virus outbreak.

Yet the return from a twomonth production shutdown hasn't gone quite according to plan. For some automakers, full production has been delayed, or it's been herky-herky, with production lines stopping and starting due to infected workers or parts shortages from Mexico and elsewhere.

"There's a lot that can go wrong in bringing people back into the plants to try to build very complicated assemblies," said Kristin Dziczek, vice president of industry and labor at the Center for Automotive Rebecause the Mexican government wouldn't allow full parts factory restarts until June 1.

Ford seemed to be hit the hardest, pausing production a half-dozen times in Dearborn, Chicago and Kansas City, Mo; to disinfect equipment and isolate workers who may have come in contact with those who tested positive.

Honda and Toyota each reported brief production pauses to disinfect equipment when a small number of workers became infected. GM and Fiat Chrysler said they have not shut down production lines due to infected workers.

None of the automakers would give exact numbers of workers who have become ill since plants were restarted. The United Auto Workers union said Ford and GM have had at least a half-dozen cases, while Fiat Chrysler has had five. At least 25 UAW members employed by the Detroit Three have died from the virus this year, but it's not clear where they caught it. Dziczek says the on-and-off work stoppages will make it difficult for automakers to meet any increased demand. "I think this is the way this is going to be for a while," she said. "You need to have the confluence of healthy workers, a healthy supply chain and healthy demand all at the same time.' U.S. auto sales have tanked since the virus began spreading in March, with sales in April down 46 percent from a year ago. Analysts are forecasting an improvement in May, but still a year-over-year decline of more than 30 percent. Cox Automotive predicts that May pickup truck sales will be down 18 percent from a year ago.

tomakers are reporting depleted supplies at some dealers, especially for pickup trucks in the Midwest.

Assembly lines at Ford's 4,000worker pickup factory in Dearborn, Michigan, have been closed twice due to workers with the virus or union fears that the shutdowns weren't long enough

The UAW local at the plant filed a grievance against the company seeking a full shutdown and testing of every worker, said Gary Walkowicz, a local bargaining committeeman. The local also wants a 24-hour waiting period after equipment is disinfected to restart the plant.

UAW spokesman Brian Rothenberg said it's being vigilant about making sure companies follow safety protocols.

"We have advocated for as

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search, an industry think tank.

Most automakers closed factories in mid-to-late March when workers began to get sick as the novel coronavirus spread. The factories started to reopen on one or two shifts in mid-May as state stay-home restrictions eased, with automakers touting safety precautions that include checking workers' temperatures, certification by workers that they don't have symptoms, social distancing, time between shifts and plastic barriers where possible to keep workers apart.

Still, some workers got COVID-19, although it's not known where they were infected. In some cases they still came to work, forcing companies to close plants temporarily for cleaning. In at least one case, a worker at a seat-making plant near Chicago got the virus, forcing a shutdown and cutting off parts. General Motors had to delay adding shifts at truck plants

Despite those declines, au-

much testing as possible and full testing when it's available," he said.

Ford procedures, following newer recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and epidemiologists, say equipment is safe within minutes of being disinfected. In some instances the company has waited several hours before bringing workers back

"We are requiring our workforce to follow these protocols in our facilities - and encouraging them to do the same outside of work," Ford spokeswoman Kelli Felker said.

GM announced that production will get closer to normal starting June 1 as it adds shifts "to meet strengthening customer demand and strong dealer demand." A company statement said three pickup truck assembly plants will go from one to three shifts, while three SUV plants in the U.S. and Canada will go from one shift to two.

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