

\$600M Investment Slated for Fairfax Plant

General Motors last week announced a \$600 million investment in the Fairfax Assembly and Stamping Plant, including the construction of a new 450,000-square-foot paint shop, the installation of a new stamping press and other upgrades.

It is one of GM's largest plant investments ever, and builds on nearly \$2 billion invested in Fairfax in the last decade. Earlier this month, GM announced it would invest \$1.5 billion in North American facilities in 2013. This Fairfax investment comprises a large part of that commitment.

Construction at the 3.2-million-square-foot plant begins later this year and is expected to take about two years to complete, increasing the footprint of the plant by about 15 percent to 3.7 million square feet. Vehicle production schedules will be unaffected by the construction, keeping the plant's three shifts of nearly 4,000 hourly and salaried employees on the job.

"This major investment is a vote of confidence in the employees and leadership of this plant and will allow them to continue producing beautiful, world-class vehicles like the Chevrolet Malibu and Buick LaCrosse - with the same quality workmanship that has defined the Fairfax complex for nearly 70 years," said GM Chairman and CEO Dan Akerson.

The all-new paint shop includes substantial upgrades in technology, and will occupy a new building at Fairfax, with new tooling, robots and state-of-the-art environmental and efficiency enhancements. Some of the upgrades include up to 20 percent smaller footprint, up to 50 percent less energy use per vehicle and reduced Volatile Organic Compound emissions as well as GM-patented Radiant Tub Ovens, designed to use 20 percent less natural gas and 40 percent less electricity. The plant will also use Thin Film Technology, which reduces water use and maintenance and eliminates hazardous chemicals from the waste stream. There will also be use of Hyper Throw E-COAT, which places more coating in cavities and recesses for optimal corrosion protection.

In the stamping facility, the upgraded AA3X press will replace

the current middle press used to create some of the structural reinforcements for vehicle body frames. The upgraded press is expected to enhance quality and reduce waste through greater accuracy.

"The United Auto Workers have proudly built vehicles in Fairfax for decades and look forward to being part of the upgrades that will be taking place in the plant," said UAW Vice President Joe Ashton, who directs the union's GM Department. "This commitment to the future of the plant and the workforce is a reminder to all of us that we build the world's best vehicles, with the world's best people."

GM's Fairfax Assembly Plant has a long history in Kansas City, dating to 1945. The plant has employed several hundred thousand people over nearly 70

years, built some of GM's best vehicles, and, during World War II, was the first industrial facility to make automobiles and jet fighters in the same building. The current plant opened in 1987. Since beginning production in Kansas City in 1945, more than 12 million GM vehicles have been built at Fairfax.

The Fairfax plant currently builds the Buick LaCrosse and Chevrolet Malibu. The Malibu was the first 2013 midsize car to earn a 5-Star Overall Vehicle Score in the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's New Car Assessment Program and a 2012 Top Safety Pick by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. The Buick LaCrosse eAssist model was named among the "Best of What's New" technologies by *Popular Science* magazine.



Tina Knudson works in engine assembly at General Motors' Fairfax Assembly plant in Kansas City, Kansas, which is going to undergo a massive makeover by GM.

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