



GM will invest \$331.8 million in facilities for new engines and transmissions, as well as adding to previously announced plant improvements.

Powertrain Efforts Are Coming to Fruition

Producing better vehicles for a demanding marketplace means spending money.

To that end, GM will invest nearly \$332 million in four manufacturing sites to produce more fuel-efficient engines and transmissions.

This, GM officials said, demonstrates GM's "commitment to deliver what customers want: technology-driven performance and fewer trips to the pump."

The investments – announced April 4 at GM plants in Flint, Bay City, Toledo, and Bedford, Ind. – will support production of a new Ecotec small gas engine, a new V6 engine, 8-speed transmission,

and tooling for an existing 6-speed transmission.

GM also is increasing previously announced powertrain investment in plants in Romulus and Saginaw to \$646 million – an increase of \$46 million – to support production of the new V6 engine.

Since 2009, GM has announced nearly \$1.8 billion of investments for the six powertrain facilities.

"We are investing in technologies and manufacturing capabilities that produce high-quality, fuel-efficient vehicles and components for our customers," said Diana Tremblay, vice president of GM North American Manufacturing.

"Today's announcement demon-

strates GM's commitment to growing the business and strengthening the plant communities where we receive so much support."

Combined, the two investments will retain about 1,650 jobs at the six facilities.

"The selection of these plants and the opportunity for the United Auto Workers to build the next generation of engines and transmissions reflects the great efforts of our workforce," said UAW Vice President Joe Ashton, who directs the union's GM department.

"This investment goes a long way to ensuring GM remains a

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Businesses Question Paying Bill for Pontiac Schools

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deep dive into their budget," but he noted that the number of students in the school district has declined from 10,000 a few years ago to about 5,000 today. Auburn Hills residents make up only about 270 of that 5,000.

"Their budget appears to have stayed about the same despite the decline in the student population," Auger said. "I don't know of any organization that can keep their budget the same after losing half their customers."

Many who live in Auburn Hills choose alternative ways to educate their children, Auger said. Some have turned to home

schooling, others pick schools of choice while some send their children to private and parochial schools.

The city is keeping groups like the chamber informed of what's happening and what peoples' rights are under the laws that determine school funding.

He said a vote of people living within a school district must be taken to break up that district. Keeping people informed on what's happening is important, he said.

"I would think all people throughout the Pontiac district would have a lot of questions of how they do business and how they reach their bottom line,"

Auger went on to elaborate.

Denise Asker, Auburn Chamber of Commerce executive director, said this \$7.8 million school district debt poses a real challenge for Auburn Hills residents and businesses because they have "to assume responsibility for nearly \$8 million in debt that is the result of a mismanaged budget."

And that's why the Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce has taken the somewhat unusual step of keeping members informed of what's going on with the Pontiac school district.

"What's important to us," Asker said, "is not only the \$8 million debt that we will be inheriting a large portion of, but the circum-

stances of the district. If they are fixed at the root cause, we will see more of this in the future."

Asker said the chamber has reached out to the powers-that-be in the district in the past, but received no warning about the current troubles.

They have also reached out to the Pontiac and Waterford chambers of commerce to let them know what's going on and what they all might be able to do together.

Ultimately, Auburn Hills is in an unusual situation. Most property taxes generated within a city are split 70 percent residential and 30 percent business.

But, Lancaster said, Auburn

Hills property taxes are 80 percent business and 20 percent residential, which is obviously not the norm.

"Auburn Hills is primarily a business center," Lancaster said. "So even if residents of the city get to vote on this issue, the entities that generate most of the income have no say in how the money is spent."

"As a businessman and chairman of the chamber, I am concerned about taxes that don't provide value to the community. If Auburn Hills ends up paying \$4 million on that debt, that comes to about \$16,000 per student from the city that actually attends school in the Pontiac district."

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