

GM Begins Construction on Its New Distribution Center

Burton, Mich., just got a boost, thanks to GM's newest building, now under construction.

General Motors Customer Care and Aftersales (CCA) broke ground on a new \$65 million ACDelco and Genuine GM Parts processing center on a vacant 141-acre lot near the intersection of Genesee and Davison roads in the City of Burton, a suburb of Flint.

The June 20 ceremony celebrated the company's largest single investment in a warehousing and logistics facility in the United States in nearly 40 years, said GM spokesman Jim Cain.

Key collaborators in the project

included Burton Mayor Paula Zelenko; Scott Henry, representing UAW Local 651; and Chad Meyer, president of NorthPoint Development.

Tim Turvey, GM global vice president, Customer Care and Aftersales, discussed the project at the ceremonial event.

"GM is executing a focused and disciplined strategy to improve our core business and position the company for the future, guided by our vision of a world with zero crashes, zero emissions and zero congestion," Turvey said.

"Our new facility in Burton will help us deliver that future. And

projects like this only become a reality when you have great teamwork and true collaboration, like we have with the City of Burton, the UAW and NorthPoint Development."

When the facility opens in early 2019, it will be the company's main induction point in the United States for ACDelco and Genuine GM service parts that need to be unitized and packaged for sale, Cain said.

Ultimately, these parts are used to maintain every Chevrolet, Buick, GMC and Cadillac sold in the United States, and hun-



Turvey spoke at the groundbreaking of GM's latest facility.

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Belvidere Assembly got an upgrade when it picked up Cherokee output.

FCA Shows Off Just What Its Belvidere Facility Can Do to Assemble Cherokee

The Jeep Cherokee has settled nicely into its new home at Belvidere Assembly in Illinois.

Belvidere Assembly Plant staff had been preparing for the Jeep Cherokee's arrival from Toledo, Ohio, since late 2016 and welcomed the Cherokee to its new production home on June 1, 2017, said FCA spokeswoman Jodi Tinson.

The decision to invest \$350 million to retrofit the Illinois facility, located about 60 miles west of

Chicago, was made as part of the company's broader industrialization plan. The move was created to respond to the market's shift away from small cars and to realign its U.S. manufacturing operations to fully utilize available capacity to expand the Jeep and Ram brands.

"FCA US was ahead of the competition in recognizing the shift in sales from cars to trucks and SUVs," said Brian Harlow, head of Manufacturing, FCA - North

America. "This led to a plan that discontinued car production in the U.S. and a complete realignment of our U.S. manufacturing operations."

"In July 2016, we announced

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Proposed Tariffs Could Affect Auto Industry

by TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) - Every workday, about 7,400 trucks mostly loaded with automotive parts rumble across the Ambassador Bridge connecting Detroit and Canada, at times snarling traffic along the busy corridor.

But if President Donald Trump delivers on threats to slap 25 percent tariffs on imported vehicles and components, there will be far fewer big rigs heading to factories that are now humming close to capacity on both sides of the border.

The tariff threat could be a negotiating ploy to restart stalled talks on the North American Free Trade Agreement. But it also could be real, since the administration already has imposed duties on \$50 billion worth of Chinese imports, as well as steel and aluminum from China, the European Union, Canada and Mexico.

Tariffs against China include some autos and parts but if those spread to Canada and Mexico, the impact will be far larger because auto manufacturing has been integrated between the three countries for nearly a quarter-century.

The Commerce Department said in a statement last week that it "has just launched its investigation into whether imports of auto and auto parts threaten to impair the national security. That investigation, which has only just begun, will inform recommendations to the president for action or inaction."

If the wider auto tariffs are imposed, industry experts say they will disrupt a decades-old symbiotic parts supply chain, raise vehicle

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Ford Buys Train Station to Build the Future

by Jim Stickford

Detroit is coming back and Ford wants to be a leader in that movement.

That was the message presented by Bill Ford, executive chairman of the board at Ford, and Ford CEO Jim Hackett at the June 19 announcement that Ford Motor Co. has purchased the abandoned Michigan Central train station in Corktown.

Ford said the building and surrounding land will be refurbished to create a facility that Ford will use to develop the latest in Autonomous Vehicle (AV) technology.

Ford put on a pair of sunglasses when he began his speech. He said that with his Irish blood he needed them to see in the sun, but also it was a page from his mother Martha's book because she was always photographed wearing sunglasses.

"Michigan Central Station is a place that in many ways tells the story of Detroit over the past century," said Ford. "We at Ford want to help write the next chapter, working together in Corktown with the best startups, the smartest talent, and the thinkers, engineers, and problem-solvers who see things differently - all to shape the future of mobility and transportation."

Ford said the train station tells the story of Detroit.

"This train station absolutely, in many ways, tells the story of this city," Ford said. "It opened in 1913. That year, Ford built 200,000 automobiles. By the end of the decade, Ford was building 1,000,000 cars a year. The train station was our Ellis Island, a

place where people came to Detroit. It was where we sent men off to war and welcomed them back. I remember coming here as a little boy and seeing how beautiful it was."

And when the last train left the station, it seemed like hope left Detroit, Ford said. Now it's time for that to change.

"We will remake the station into a place of possibility," Ford said. "This is not just a symbolic gesture. We have plans for the station and we have plans for Corktown. People measure the greatness of a city in different ways, but what matters is the

scope of people and their dreams. That's how you measure a city."

At the same time, Ford is continuing with its Dearborn Campus Transformation plan that started in 2016. This summer the 150,000-square-foot Wagner Place development in West Dearborn is on track to open, as is a new driving dynamics lab located on Ford's Product Development Campus, Ford said. The 10-year Dearborn plan will also continue to bring key work groups closer together, including the company's product development teams to one campus.



Ford spoke of the company's plans to revitalize Corktown, starting by refurbishing the old train station.

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J.D.Power Says FCA Quality Improves Fastest in Industry

The quest for improved automotive quality is a never-ending process, and to that end, FCA US has improved its initial quality at a faster rate than the industry average for the third consecutive year, according to J.D. Power's 2018 U.S. Initial Quality Study (IQS).

Jeep led all FCA US brands in initial quality improvement with more than a 10 percent growth in the brand's initial quality score from last year's study, said FCA spokesman Berj Alexanian. Ram placed in the top 10 among all brands for the second consecutive year.

"We are pleased to see that the company's initial quality improvement has outpaced the industry average for three straight years," said Scott Garberding, head of Quality, FCA. "We have continued to improve and we have more work to do. We are highly focused on satisfying our customers by continuing to bring new technologies and products to market, with improved quality and reliability."

Two FCA US vehicles placed in the top three of their respective segments for initial quality with the Dodge Grand Caravan ranked highest among Minivans and the Chrysler 300 third among Large Cars.

"There's no question that most automakers are doing a great job of listening to consumers and are producing vehicle quality of the highest caliber," said Dave Sargent, vice president of Global Au-

tomotive at J.D. Power. "That said, some vehicle owners are still finding problems. As vehicles become more complex and automated, it is critical that consumers have complete confidence in automakers' ability to deliver fault-free vehicles."

IQS is based on responses from more than 75,000 purchasers and lessees of new 2018 model-year vehicles surveyed after 90 days of ownership. The study asks customers to identify issues with their vehicles' design, as well as defects.

The IQS study, in its 32nd year, is based on a 233-question survey conducted between February and May 2018 by J.D. Power.

The IQS report gave the Dodge Grand Caravan minivan a five out of five rating in overall minivan quality. The only other make to receive that rating was the Kia Sedona.

The Grand Caravan beat the Sedona in the "Body & Interior Quality - Mechanical" category, as well as the "Overall Quality Design" and "Body & Interior Quality - Design" and "Features & Accessories Quality - Design" categories.

J.D. Power reviewers wrote of the Grand Caravan that it started as an "original family hauler dating back to the '80s, the current 2018 Dodge Grand Caravan offers economy, space for 7-8 passengers and folding Stow'n Go seating in four value trims. New for 2018 is a fun color: IndiGo Blue.



J.D. Power calls 2018 Dodge Grand Caravan tops in improving quality.

"All 2018 Grand Caravans include backup camera and infotainment system with 6.5-in. touchscreen. A Blacktop appearance package, captain's chair configuration, Bluetooth connectivity and aluminum wheels are added options."

The 2018 Dodge Grand Caravan receives an initial quality Power Circle Rating of 5 out of 5.

The Chrysler 300 was a top finisher in the Large Car segment.

J.D. Power judges gave it a score of five out of five in the "Overall Quality - Design" category.

J.D. Power editors, when reviewing the 2018 300 stated that though "its Bentleysque proportions haven't changed over the course of nearly two decades, the Chrysler 300 remains appeal-

ing, especially to people seeking an upscale appearance at a discount. Despite the car's ubiquity, there is a custom look to the car thanks to its long hood, chopped roofline, exaggerated wheel arches, and oversized wheels. In the 300S trim, with black paint, blacked-out appearance details, and dark-finish 20-in. rims, this Chrysler looks especially menacing.

"For 2018, it is worth noting that the new Touring trim level is offered with a Sport Appearance package that adds the 300S trim's wheels and blacked-out exterior trim, giving the base car the same look at a much lower price.

"Bargain hunters seeking an upscale look at an impressive value will want to consider this version of the 300."

GM Opens New Facility Near Flint Operations

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

dreds of competitive vehicles as well.

With 1.1 million square feet of floor space, the facility will be more than twice the size of the company's existing parts processing center, which is located about five miles away.

The new facility in Burton will have 84 shipping and receiving docks, up from 35 today.

Close to 700 hourly and salaried employees will staff the facility.

"The current Davison Road facility is landfill-free - one of more than 140 in GM's global network," said Turvey.

"We will be working toward the same status for the new facility.

"It will be built with energy-efficient LED light, and a sophisticated energy management system to reduce power consumption and improve comfort."

After the new facility opens, GM will close its existing processing center on Davison Road in Burton, and those employees will transfer to the new site.

NorthPoint Development will build the new facility and lease it to GM for an initial term of 12.5 years.

GM Sees a Future in Manufacturing Sedans

DETROIT (AP) - General Motors is getting rid of three Cadillac sedans and replacing them with two new ones over the next three-and-a-half years.

The company says it's sinking \$175 million into a Lansing, Mich., factory to make replacements for the ATS compact, CTS midsize and XTS full-size cars.

Automakers are starting to dump sedan models in the U.S. as buyers continue to flock to SUVs and trucks. Fiat Chrysler cut U.S.-made compact and mid-size cars in 2016, while Ford announced earlier this year that it would stop selling all cars but the Mustang over the next several years.

This year, trucks and SUVs accounted for more than two-thirds of U.S. auto sales, with cars at about one-third.

Just five years ago, it was about half for each.

The ATS won't be replaced, but Cadillac hopes to cover its market with the new vehicles.

The ATS was designed to compete with the BMW 3 Series but never really caught on. The XTS was based on a Chevrolet Impala but also never sold well. It also overlapped with Cadillac's CT6 flagship large sedan.

Last year, ATS sales fell 39 percent, while CTS sales dropped 35 percent and XTS sales were off 27 percent.

The ATS recovered a bit this

year but is still far behind competitors.

Spokesman Donny Nordlicht would say only that the new cars will debut by the end of 2021, and that further details would be released later.

The changes will not change the Lansing Grand River factory's workforce of about 2,000 people.

The Cadillac brand is emphasizing SUVs to match market demand, according to GM. Cadillac has promised to put out seven new vehicles by the end of 2021, with only two of them being sedans.

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FCA's Belvidere Plant Upgraded for Jeep

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the first phase of the plan – which included a total investment of \$2.5 billion and commitment to add 1,700 jobs – to focus all of our U.S. production on the vehicles consumers are demanding.

“Moving the Jeep Cherokee from Toledo to Belvidere was the first step toward accomplishing this plan that will ultimately impact five facilities in three states.”

The last Jeep Cherokee rolled off the line at the Toledo North Assembly Plant on April 6, 2017. Since its birth in June 2013, Toledo employees built nearly 950,000 vehicles. Toledo North has now been retooled to build the new Jeep Wrangler, which launched in December 2017, Tinson said.

For more than four years, the Belvidere Assembly Plant built three distinct vehicles with two different architectures on one assembly line. The transition from building three vehicles to building one not only required a physical makeover of the plant and its processes, but also a culture shift for the employees, Harlow said.

That process began in October 2016, long before the plant shut down for 12 weeks of construction. A cross-section of 150 employees, representing all areas of the plant, gathered for a week-long offsite workshop.

In addition to receiving World Class Manufacturing and leadership training, the employees began addressing non-production issues to improve the plant's operations, ranging from how to welcome new employees and im-

proving communications to discussing plans for a new cafeteria.

“Preparing and engaging employees in the launch of a vehicle is equally as important as preparing the actual facility,” said Tomasz Gebka, Belvidere Assembly Plant manager.

“The employees are the brains, the creativity and the heart of the plant. They truly are the strength behind the continued success of the Jeep Cherokee.”

One of the other big changes at Belvidere is the institution of uniforms – part of a plan to align all FCA plants with global standards – to all employees, both hourly and salaried.

Branded with Jeep logos, the uniforms are designed to build pride around the iconic nameplate and to help employees feel connected to the global FCA team, Tinson said.

Projects to prepare the Belvidere plant for production of the Jeep Cherokee touched all areas of the plant – body shop, paint shop and general assembly – with approximately 75 percent of the facility experiencing significant equipment changes.

Prior to retooling, Belvidere Assembly had two body shops. The north body shop – which is 92 percent automated with 650 welding robots, 100 sealer robots and 200 material handling robots – was added in 2011 as part of a \$700 million investment to produce the Dodge Dart.

The south body shop produced the Jeep Compass and Jeep Patriot.

Because the Dart and Cherokee shared the same architecture – the Compact U.S. Wide – the north body shop required very few changes.

The 965,000-square-foot south body shop, however, was completely gutted, overhauled and painted, creating white space to



FCA improved production line methods to build the new Cherokee.

accommodate additional work, Tinson said.

As a result, four sub-assembly stations, including dashboard and center floor assemblies, were transferred to Belvidere from the company's central stamping location in Warren, a move that allows for better dimensional quality control and cost reduction.

After 12 hours in the body shop, the completed Jeep Cherokee body-in-white travels to the paint shop as part of the next stage of vehicle production, Tinson said.

Belvidere's 700,000-square-foot “coloring box” is 40 percent automated with 121 robots.

One of the improvements made to the plant's paint shop was the installation of a new polish deck, which includes lights that automatically adjust in intensity based on the vehicle's paint color or reflectivity, Tinson said.

General assembly – trim, chassis and final production – spreads across more than one million square feet, and is where more than 50 percent of the Belvidere employees do their work.

It's the area that saw the most

significant transformation with nearly all of the workstations designed to be more ergonomically friendly, resulting in a safer work environment for the operators and a better-quality vehicle for customers.

A major production line change was the addition of 80 all-new “limos.”

The limos are designed and built by the plant's skilled trades employees, and the limos travel with the vehicle down the line, carrying the parts the operators will need to assemble the Cherokee.

Eight additional ergonomic or “ergo” assist arms have been incorporated to help operators install heavy components, like fuel tanks and skid plates, which can weigh as much as 20 pounds each.

The ergo assist arms triple the human strength of one operator, allowing for greater assembly precision and quality, and reducing repetitive motions that can cause injuries.

Before rolling off the assembly line, every vehicle's electrical systems are tested in a three-minute exam during which more than 200 electrical checks are confirmed.



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Dodge Mopar Race Team Earns Wins

It was a Father's Day to remember for Mopar Dodge/SRT drivers Ron Capps and Tony Schumacher, who raced to victory in the Funny Car and Top Fuel classes, respectively, at the NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals in Bristol, Tenn.

Capps' victory on June 17 marked the fifth straight for a Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car driver at Bristol Dragway.

The win by Capps was also the third of 2018 for a Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Funny Car driver and moved him to fifth in the Funny Car standings. Along with Tony Schumacher's victory, Mopar Dodge drivers have now claimed five wins in the NHRA Nitro classes this season.

Capps, the Mopar-powered NAPA Dodge Charger R/T pilot, picked up his second consecutive NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals Funny Car Wally and first trophy of the 2018 season.

The 2016 world champion defeated John Force, reigning world champ Robert Hight, J.R. Todd and Bob Tasca III on his way to becoming the most decorated Funny Car driver in Bristol Dragway history, with five victories at the picturesque facility.

Both Capps and Force entered the race weekend tied for the most Funny Car wins at Bristol Dragway, with four trophies each. No. 11 starter Capps was quick on the throttle against the veteran driver, launching his Dodge off the starting line in 0.049-seconds and never trailing for the win.

Matched up in the quarterfinals against Hight, Capps was machine-like, gaining the holeshot start over his opponent. Hight was able to catch up early in the run, and the veteran drivers battled neck-and-neck until Capps was able to surge ahead and take the win with his 4.208 run.

In the finals, Capps quickly made up a small starting line advantage by Tasca and added to his lead all the way down to the finish stripe.

The victory earned him his 58th Funny Car win, 59th overall and a milestone 300th nitro event Wally for DSR.

Pacifica Boasts New Slick S Package

The Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid minivan is sure to turn heads and attract even more attention courtesy of the newly available S Appearance Package, said Steve Beahm, head of Passenger Car Brands – Dodge, SRT, Chrysler and Fiat, FCA – North America. Featuring black accents inside and out, the S Appearance Package has been wildly successful on Pacifica gas models.

For 2019, the sporty, custom look is now available on all Pacifica Hybrid models, said FCA spokeswoman Kristin Starnes.

"The factory custom look of the S Appearance model is really resonating with our Pacifica buyers, so much so that we are now making it available on the Pacifica Hybrid model, as well," said Beahm. "With 84 miles per gallon equivalent (MPGe) in electric-only mode and 33 miles of all-electric range this package makes the industry's only hybrid minivan even more unique."

The Pacifica Hybrid with the S Appearance Package features Gloss Black accents throughout the exterior, including grille surrounds, eyebrow accents on headlamps, daylight opening moldings and rear valance molding. Eighteen-inch wheels with a Black Noise finish and a black roof rack are standard.

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BASF Examines Current Cultures to Find Future Colors

The need to stay authentic in a world where technology continues to blur the lines between reality and artificiality is the driving force behind the BASF's 2018-19 Automotive Color Trends theme – Keep it Real, said Paul Czornij, head of design for Southfield-based BASF North America Coatings, Color and Design.

As innovations such as artificial intelligence, autonomous driving and robotic industrialization take hold, the return to the human element – people's needs and emotions – becomes increasingly important, Czornij said. The designers at BASF's Coatings division translated these observations into a collection of 65 colors for automotive surfaces.

Dark colors, blue hues and complex effects represent the omnipresence of technology, Czornij said. Advancements in digitalization make technology become less visible and more intertwined with reality. Augmented reality applications and smart gadgets that simplify everyday life merge the real with the digital world. People seem to spend more time on online platforms, striving for perfection on social media, than in the real world. This omnipresence of technology is reflected in the Automotive Color Trends.

Shades of gray and blue are the focal point of the collection. Achromatic colors are combined with complex effects that add colorful and natural accents and represent the merging of reality and the virtual world. Blue hues – mirroring the color of screens and digital light – appear as strong saturated colors, Czornij said. Natural textures and color effects symbolize the search for human qualities in a virtual world.

Car sharing concepts, ride hail-

ing services and autonomous driving shift a car's function from a personally-owned object to a more public mode of transportation. For cars that are designed for sharing, color palettes with a universal appeal will play a significant role, Czornij said. The trend collection shows how elaborate textures and intricate effects can make each color truly unique.

In addition, BASF addresses future mobility with the development of functional colors. Select colors of the collection feature a coatings system that mitigates heat buildup on the vehicle surface. Further innovations include colors with state-of-the-art functionality, increasing reflectivity for enhanced LiDAR detectability, without compromising their aesthetic appeal.

In North America, the dismantling of public heroes makes room for new idols, Czornij said. Flaws are accepted as part of being human and diversity is celebrated. A new enthusiasm for science and especially space travel draws attention to far away worlds.

The connection of the real and virtual world as well as the relationship of earth and space is captured in the BASF's key color, Atomium Sky, predicted to influence 2022 vehicle models in North America, Czornij said.

This is the second consecutive year that BASF selected a blue as its key color, demonstrating its growing prominence in this region. Atomium Sky is a deeply saturated blue with a medium coarseness that transitions to a softer, semi-opaque hue, exuding playfulness while demonstrating futuristic and forward-thinking.

"This is one of the most diverse color collections BASF has ever introduced," said Czornij. "There's a juxtaposition between achromatic and strong colors.

Grays and pastels reflect the urban look with essential, neutral spaces, whereas bright, chromatic colors that are optimistic, luxurious and playful point to advances in technology."

The diversity is driven by economic and purchasing trends, and the evolving mobility landscape. Highlights of the North America colors include:

- **Metal's Mettle:** a medium to dark grey with a coarseness and a dynamic sparkle demonstrates the cool rawness and minimalism of urbanism.
- **Centripetal Blue:** a blue-black color with a medium coarse sparkle enhances detectability and performance for autonomous vehicles.
- **Kleur:** a bright, vibrant red inspires a feeling of connectedness with a high saturation that makes it more visible, an important characteristic for self-driving vehicles.

"Self-driving technology was a crucial component of this year's conversation, both in terms of the psychology of public perception and acceptance of future mobility, and the functionality of the coating," said Czornij.

"Some of the colors include our innovative, industry-leading pigmentation to increase reflectivity for LiDAR equipment, which is one of the ways self-driving cars can detect objects in their surroundings."

In Asia Pacific, the quest for quality in the real life is key.

People in the Asia Pacific region have an ambivalent relationship with technology. They freely give their personal data to companies that make everyday life more convenient and embrace emotional bonds to machines with artificial intelligence,



Czornij said psychology helps determine new automobile colors.

Czornij said. At the same time a desire for human and real-life contacts and experiences reshapes public spaces in the cities.

Gray Ambivalence, a glaring metallic gray, stands for the integration of high-performance technology in everyday life. It is balanced by a solid flop that connects to the real world.

In Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA), life in urban spaces are the focus.

In the EMEA region, the use of public space is changing, with real places taking on new value. They invite people to take a break from the digital world. Gray nuances build on this trend. With their associations with con-

crete, they stand for urbanity and – combined with haptic effects – allude to the significance of what can be experienced for real, Czornij said.

Extraordinary effects symbolize the desire for attention. The metallic anthracite "The Urbanist" stands for the urban, globally networked cosmopolite. At the same time, it represents the blending of humans and technology.

In South America, the transformation of classic color spaces offers a visual connection to the diversity of the region. Two of the most popular color spaces in the automotive market – black and white – are transformed into eclectic coatings for cars.



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Tesla Accuses Ex-Employee

DETROIT (AP) – A former employee hacked into computers at Tesla’s Nevada battery factory, stole confidential information and combined it with falsehoods in leaks to the media, the electric car maker alleged in a federal lawsuit.

The suit was filed June 20, three days after CEO Elon Musk warned employees of sabotage from within the company.

Martin Tripp of Sparks, Nev., admitted to Tesla investigators that he wrote software that transferred several gigabytes of data outside the company, including dozens of photographs and a video, according to the lawsuit filed June 20.

Hacking software from Tripp also was running on three computer systems of other employees “so that the data would be exported even after he left the company and so that those individuals would be falsely implicated,” the lawsuit alleged.

A man who answered a call June 20 at a number believed to be Tripp’s said he did not know Tripp. An email message was not answered.

Tripp made false claims about the information he stole, including claims that Tesla used punctured battery cells in the Model 3 electric car, and claims about the amount and value of scrap material generated by Tesla in the manufacturing process, the lawsuit alleged. Some of the claims made it into media stories about the company, but media organizations are not identified in the lawsuit.

The company also alleges that Tripp sent photographs and data to unspecified third parties including financial information and battery manufacturing details. Data was combined with false information given to the media, the lawsuit said.

The company says Tesla’s name was damaged and the company lost business and profits due to the disclosures.

On June 17, Musk emailed employees telling them of “extensive and damaging sabotage” to the company’s manufacturing operating system done under false user names. He wrote that the person’s motivation was that he wanted a promotion that he did not receive. Musk wrote that there’s a long list of organizations that “want Tesla to die,” including Wall Street stock short-sellers and oil and gas companies.

The company was investigating whether the former employee acted alone, Musk wrote.

Tesla wants monetary damages and an order to prevent Tripp from obtaining or disclosing information. It also seeks a court order to inspect his computers, electronic storage devices, email accounts and external storage accounts.

Tesla would not comment on the lawsuit June 20.

It was unclear if the company reported the alleged thefts to law enforcement.

Sparks police officer Ken Gallop said there was no record of an investigation involving Martin Tripp. Storey County Sheriff Gerald Antinoro did not immediately respond to email and telephone messages from The Associated Press. Sandra Breault, spokeswoman for the FBI in Nevada, said she was checking into the matter.

Tripp joined the company in October of 2017 at the battery factory as a process technician, and had electronically signed a non-disclosure agreement, the lawsuit said.

Within a few months of his hiring, managers identified problems with his job performance, including at times being disruptive and combative with colleagues, according to the document. He was reassigned on May 17, 2018, and retaliated against the company by stealing the information, the lawsuit alleged.

July 4 Travel to be Heavy

A record-breaking 46.9 million Americans will travel 50 miles or more away from home this Independence Day holiday, an increase of more than 5 percent compared with last year and the highest number since AAA started tracking 18 years ago.

For the 39.7 million Americans planning a Fourth of July road trip, INRIX, a global transportation analytics company, predicts travel times in the most congested cities in the U.S. could be twice as long as the normal trip, with Tuesday, July 3, being the busiest day, said AAA spokeswoman Julie Hall.

“This Independence Day will be one for the record books, as more Americans take to the nation’s roads, skies, rails and waterways than ever before,” said Bill Sutherland, senior vice president, AAA Travel and Publishing. “Confident consumers with additional disposable income will look to spend on travel this holiday, building on an already busy summer travel season.”

In addition to strong economic variables, the expected increase in travelers this year is helped by Independence Day falling on a Wednesday, giving travelers more flexibility to schedule a trip the weekend before or after the holiday.

The Independence Day holiday period is defined by AAA as Tuesday, July 3, to Sunday, July 8, Hall said.

Here’s the 2018 Independence Day Holiday Travel Forecast:

- Automobiles – The vast majority of travelers – 39.7 million – will hit the road this Independence Day, 5.1 percent more than last year.
- Planes – A record-breaking

3.8 million people will travel by air, a 7.9 percent increase and the ninth year of consecutive air travel volume increases.

- Trains, Buses and Cruise Ships – Travel across these sectors will increase by 5.8 percent to a total of 3.5 million passengers.

Hall said drivers should beware of “Terrible Tuesday” and the peak traffic times. For the Detroit area, AAA calculates peak driving will take place between 3:30 and 5:30 p.m.

Drivers should expect trips to take 1.6 times longer than normal. INRIX, in collaboration with AAA, predicts drivers will experience the worst congestion over the holiday week on Tuesday, July 3, in the late afternoon – as commuters leave work early and mix with holiday travelers.

“With a record-level number of travelers hitting the road this holiday, drivers must be prepared for delays around major metros,” says Scott Sedlik, general manager and vice president - public sector, INRIX.

“Although travel times are expected to nominally increase throughout the week, Tuesday afternoon will hands down be the worst time to be on the road. Our advice to drivers is to avoid peak commuting hours altogether or consider alternative routes.”

Gas prices are starting to stabilize heading into Independence Day, Hall said. Gas prices have slowly but steadily started to fall since the 2018 high of \$2.97 set over Memorial Day weekend. Since then, the national gas price has dropped nine cents to \$2.88 (as of June 20), which is 59 cents more than one year ago.



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Tariffs Could Affect U.S. Auto Industry

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

prices, cut new-vehicle sales, cost jobs in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, and even slow related sectors of the economy.

“It seems like it is going to be so devastating that I can’t imagine that they’re actually going to do it,” said Kristen Dziczek, vice president of labor and economics at the Center for Automotive Research, an industry think tank.

Trump, who was sniping on Twitter at Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau after a contentious economic summit of the Group of Seven earlier this month, told the Commerce Department to look at national security reasons to justify tariffs with hopes of bringing factory jobs to the U.S.

He tweeted that the administration would “look at tariffs on automobiles flooding the U.S. Market!”

But experts predict the tariffs likely would do the opposite, slowing the economy as other countries retaliate.

Here’s what they say is likely to happen:

The tariffs would be charged on parts and assembled autos. Canada, Mexico and others would likely retaliate with duties, and automakers won’t be able to absorb all of the increases.

“So they will have to raise prices.

“Imported parts, which all cars and trucks have, will cost more, further raising costs.

“We’re all going to pay a lot more for vehicles,” said Tim Galbraith, sales manager of Cavalier tool and manufacturing in Windsor, Ontario, near Detroit, maker of steel molds used to produce plastic auto parts.

About 44 percent of the 17.2

million new vehicles sold last year in the U.S. were imported from other countries, and half of those came from Canada and Mexico.

All have parts from outside the U.S., sometimes as much as 40 percent.

Based on the 24-year-old NAFTA, automakers and suppliers constantly ship fully assembled vehicles as well as engines, transmissions and thousands of small widgets across both U.S. borders.

Parts also come from China and other countries.

It’s difficult to determine how large any price increases would be.

“It seems like it is going to be so devastating that I can’t imagine that they’re actually going to do it.”

– Kristen Dziczek, Center for Automotive Research

But some back-of-the-envelope calculations show that a Chevrolet Equinox small SUV made in Canada would cost about \$5,250 more in the U.S. if General Motors doesn’t eat part of it.

That’s based on an average price of \$30,000 in the U.S. for the hot-selling Equinox, made primarily in Ingersoll, Ontario.

Tariffs are charged on the manufacturing cost, which is about 70 percent of the sales price.

Toyota’s RAV4, a main Equinox competitor and the top-selling vehicle in the U.S. that’s not a pickup truck, also is made in Canada and would face the same duties. “An import tariff would hurt consumers the most since it would increase the costs of vehicles and parts,” Toyota said in a statement.

Honda’s CR-V, another small SUV, is made in Ohio and would be exempt from the tariff on assembled vehicles, so it would have a price advantage.

But about one-quarter of its parts come from other countries. That would force Honda to raise its price too, said Dziczek.

With higher prices, many people will either keep current vehicles or buy used ones.

Jeff Schuster, senior vice president LMC Automotive, expects U.S. new-vehicle sales would fall 1 million to 2 million per year if tariffs are imposed.

Since U.S. auto factories making popular models are running near capacity, automakers couldn’t do much in the short run to build more vehicles in the U.S. and avoid the tariff, Schuster said.

As sales fall, auto and parts makers would need to cut costs by laying off workers. Mexico and Canada would be hit first, but since they import parts from the U.S., component makers domestically also would have to cut.

For instance, the RAV4’s engines are made in Alabama and transmissions in West Virginia.

If sales drop, those factories wouldn’t need as many workers.

On the assembly line at the Ontario Equinox factory, the 2,400 workers are worried about the escalating dispute, said Joe Graves, the union president.

“I don’t really see how one individual can change everything that was put in place over decades,” Graves said of Trump. “It does cause a lot of uncertainty and instability with our members.”

As sales slump, dealers who sell imported cars would lay off workers, too.

The pro-free trade Peterson Institute predicted that if other countries impose tariffs, U.S. auto production would fall 4 percent, costing 624,000 U.S. jobs in about one-to-three years.

Other sectors of the economy would also be hit because autos touch nearly all manufacturing, said Dan Ujcz, a trade lawyer in Columbus, Ohio.

Tariffs would “be a shock wave through the economy. And that will be a red line for Congress to step in and do something,” he predicted.

Retaliatory tariffs from other countries would likely hit U.S. agriculture and other businesses, curtailing exports and also costing jobs, said Dziczek.

Companies with price advantages due to the tariffs may increase U.S. production, and that could bring more jobs.

But Schuster and others expect they would raise production with the existing workforce.

Ford Sponsors Fireworks

The countdown has begun for the Ford Fireworks. Celebrating 60 years, this year’s display is scheduled to take place on Monday, June 25, at 9:55 p.m.

Produced by The Parade Company, the Ford Fireworks is also hailed as one of the largest tributes to America’s independence, drawing hundreds of thousands of people for a night of stunning riverfront views and family excitement, said Ford Fireworks spokeswoman Heather George. The theme for this year’s show is “Come Alive in the D!”

“The Parade Company is proud to produce a summertime tradition in Detroit that brings together our community and showcases the beauty of our magnificent skyline,” said Tony Michaels, president & CEO, The Parade Company.

“With Ford Motor Company’s incredible support, the show grows bigger and more vibrant each year. It’s hands down one of the best shows in the country.”

In its role as the show’s producer, The Parade Company curates the musical arrangement and works exclusively with Zambelli Fireworks to stage more

than 10,000 pyrotechnic effects visible for miles along the Detroit River. The 2018 display will be choreographed again by world-renowned Patrick Brault, whose experience designing pyrotechnic displays includes past Olympic celebrations.

“We are proud to partner with The Parade Company to support one of our city’s most thrilling family traditions,” said Jim Vella, president, Ford Motor Company Fund, the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company. “Building stronger communities is core to our mission. Whether you’re on Belle Isle, in Hart Plaza or along the riverfront, the Ford Fireworks bring people together.”

The event, sponsored by Ford Motor Company since 2013, is also one of The Parade Company’s largest and most popular annual fundraisers.

This year, guests will experience live music from Your Generation in Concert on the main stage, with food by Andiamo.

To learn more, visit www.theparade.org or call 313-923-7400.

All proceeds benefit the Michigan Thanksgiving Parade Foundation.



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Tesla Fires Result in Offer by GM to Actress

The Associated Press has reported that the National Transportation Safety Board is sending an investigator to look into a Tesla battery fire in Southern California.

The specialist will observe Tesla's examination of the Model S that caught fire June 15 on a street in West Hollywood. The agency says the trip will allow it to learn about fires in all battery-powered vehicles.

Actor Mary McCormack shared video of her husband's Tesla car shooting flames near the front wheels. AP reported that she said in a tweet that there was no accident and the incident was "out of the blue." McCormack is married to director Michael Morris.

Tesla called the incident "an extraordinarily unusual occurrence" and says it's investigating.

No one was hurt in the fire.

But that is not the end of the story. Ray Wert, team leader for GM's Advanced Technology Communications, contacted Mc-

Cormack through Twitter and offered the use of a Bolt EV.

Wert said that offer of a loan was not part of a larger effort to replace damaged Tesla with Bolts. Rather, the GM Advanced Tech Comms team are just fans of her show "The West Wing" and not any other reason than that.



GM CEO Mary Barra and a Bolt like the one offered to Mary McCormack.

GM Honors Those Who Risk Lives to Help

It's a way of saying thanks.

Chevrolet, Buick, GMC and OnStar have launched a new program designed to recognize the bravery, dedication and resolve of America's first responders, said GM spokeswoman Lauren Langille.

"Millions of men and women serve their neighbors as police officers, firefighters, emergency medical service professionals and 911 dispatchers," said Steve Hill, GM vice president of United States Sales, Service and Marketing.

"Not long after the hurricanes of 2017, we started thinking about ways to recognize first responders in a really meaningful

way. The team came back and said first responders deserve the same new vehicle discount we offer members of the military because every single person in uniform helps protect us."

Paid and volunteer police, firefighters, EMTs/paramedics and 911 dispatchers now qualify for a special discount below the manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) on new vehicles at participating dealers.

The discount is compatible with most other available offers, Langille said.

According to The American Security Council Foundation, there are an estimated 800,000 police officers in the U.S., as well as 1.13

million firefighters and 891,000 emergency medical service professionals.

First responders can also receive an offer of 15 percent off OnStar Safety & Security and select Connected Services plans. For 21 years, OnStar has worked closely with its network of first responders every day to help save lives.

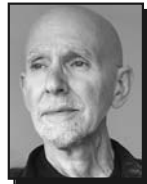
In 2017, OnStar responded to nearly 46,000 Automatic Crash Response notifications in the U.S. in partnership with first responders.

Program details are available at www.gmfirstresponderdiscount.com and www.onstar.com/heroes, Langille said.

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Head of Audi is Arrested

BERLIN (AP) – German authorities on June 18 detained the chief executive of Volkswagen's Audi division, Rupert Stadler, as part of a probe into manipulation of emissions controls.

The move follows a search last week of Stadler's private residence, ordered by Munich prosecutors investigating the manager on suspicion of fraud and indirect improprieties with documents.

"Audi CEO Rupert Stadler was provisionally arrested this morning," the company said in a statement.

It said shortly afterward that a judge had ordered him kept in custody pending possible charges at prosecutors' request.

The company said that it couldn't comment further due to the ongoing investigation, but stressed that "the presumption

of innocence remains in place for Mr. Stadler."

German news agency dpa reported that prosecutors decided to seek Stadler's arrest due to fears he might try to evade justice. A former head of Audi's engine development unit is already in investigative detention.

A total of 20 people are under suspicion in the Audi probe, which focuses on cars sold in Europe that were believed to be equipped with software that turned emissions controls off during regular driving.

Volkswagen has pleaded guilty to criminal charges in the United States and nine managers, including former CEO Martin Winterkorn, were charged there. Two are serving prison terms; Winterkorn and the others remained in Germany and are unlikely to be extradited.

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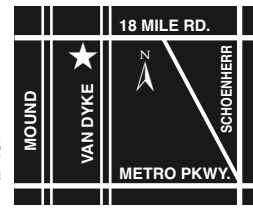
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Ford Bets on Corktown to Create the Future

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

communicate with an increasingly smart and connected world, Ford said. That's why Ford is developing a Transportation Mobility Cloud – an open platform that manages information flow and transactions between different services – to help cities optimize their various modes of transit.

The company, Ford said, is also committed to ensuring vehicles can communicate with tech-enabled surroundings to reduce CO2, lower congestion, and improve safety.

“In Corktown, Ford’s efforts can come together in an urban environment, proving-out technology in the same environment where new ideas must be applied,” Ford said. “This campus has the potential to help return Detroit to being the ‘mobility capital of the world’ – shaping the future of transportation for the better.”

The acquisition of Michigan Central Station comes alongside the company’s purchase of the former Detroit Public Schools Book Depository, two acres of vacant land, the site of an old brass factory and the recent purchase of a refurbished former factory in Corktown, now home to Ford’s electric vehicle and autonomous vehicle business teams.

Hackett pointed out that the Corktown development will not take away from the company’s Dearborn campus.

Ford plans to have at least 1.2 million square feet of space in Corktown, three-quarters of which will be split between the company and its partners. Approximately 2,500 Ford employees, most from the mobility team, will call Corktown their work home by 2022 – with space to accommodate 2,500 additional

employees of partners and other businesses.

“The remaining 300,000 square feet will serve as a mix of community and retail space, and residential housing,” Hackett said. “This project is supported by our strong partnership with state and local government officials.”

Development of Michigan Central Station and other Corktown locations is critical to Ford’s future, Ford said.

Being in the heart of America’s comeback city, said Ford, will help attract talent, startups and engineers that want to address these issues with Ford.

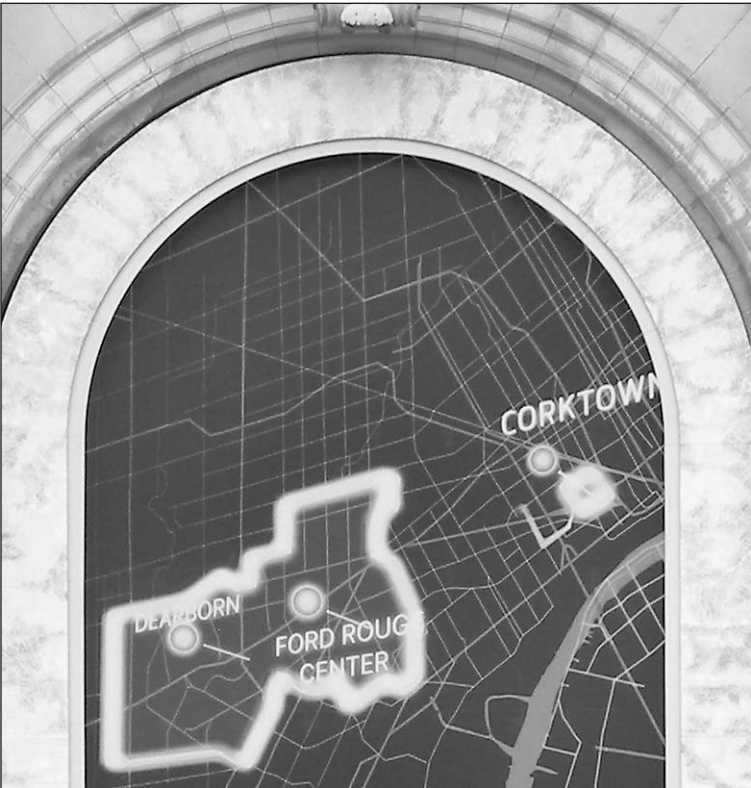
Hackett said the company wants the project to be an anchor that will lift the entire region.

“What Rouge was to Ford in the industrial age, Corktown can be for Ford in the information age,” said Hackett.

“It will be the proving ground where Ford and our partners design and test the services and solutions for the way people are going to live and get around tomorrow, creating a Southeast Michigan mobility corridor that spans west from Dearborn to Ann Arbor, and east to Detroit.”

New developments in Dearborn and in Corktown, said Hackett, will give the company the greatest home field advantage ever.

“This place will become a cathedral of knowledge, where new ideas are birthed,” Hackett said.



This display shows Ford’s efforts to create a new “auto” corridor.



2018 Ford Super Duty

Ford’s Efforts to Improve Vehicle Quality is Noticed

Quality and Ford vehicles go well together. At least according to the 2018 J.D. Power Initial Quality Study (IQS).

The Lincoln MKC, the Lincoln Continental, the Ford Mustang, the Ford Super Duty Pickup and the Ford Expedition all took honors in their IQS vehicle categories.

The 2018 Lincoln MKC receives an Initial Quality Power Circle Rating of 5 out of 5 and receives a quality award in the Compact Premium SUV segment from J.D. Power editors.

They wrote, “based on the Ford Escape, the Lincoln MKC has its own styling and an exclusive engine upgrade. A turbocharged 2.0-liter 4-cylinder is standard, paired with front-wheel or all-wheel drive. Upgrade from base Premiere to Select or Reserve trim, and a turbocharged 2.3-liter 4-cylinder engine is available with AWD. Lincoln also offers the MKC with plush Black Label trim.”

Editors noted that, according to their consumer surveys, the five most appealing attributes of the Lincoln MKC are (in descending order) exterior styling, interior design, driving dynamics, engine/transmission, and seats and safety/visibility in a tie.

J.D. Power reviewer Liz Kim wrote of the 2018 Expedition, “Whether you need its hauling and towing capability or its interior size for cargo or passengers, the new 2018 Ford Expedition shines in almost every aspect. With this redesign, it sets the standards for the segment.”

She also had nice things to say about the Expedition’s handling, writing, “where the Expedition is at home is on the highway. It is remarkably easy to blast down the freeway, the SUV swallowing up bumps and harshness thanks in part to its independent rear suspension. Then you look down

at the speedometer and realize that you’ve been going faster than is legally prudent.

“No matter the situation, the Expedition’s steering is remarkably direct, and the brakes are easy to modulate. It’s easy to see why the Expedition’s driving dynamics are among owner’s favorite features, and this new Expedition should make them even happier.”

J.D. Power reviewers also called the Ford Super Duty pickup “hands down” the most capable large light-duty truck. The reviewer also liked how comfortable the front seats were and the vehicle’s heating and cooling systems.

“Customers want a vehicle that keeps them connected whether they’re going places or just out enjoying a drive,” said Jim VanSlambrouck, Ford’s Director of Quality for The Americas. “Our improving quality scores show we are delivering smart vehicles for a smart world that are also easy to use.”

Ford also showed improvements in exterior, seating, the drive experience, feature control displays, the interior and air conditioning categories. As a result, Ford Motor Company earned more vehicle segment awards than any other automaker, VanSlambrouck said.

The Ford brand improves for the fifth year in a row and at a rate faster than the industry, showing 81 problems per 100 vehicles, down from 86 in 2017, VanSlambrouck said. Lincoln improves to a third-place ranking among premium brands, with 83 problems per 100 vehicles, down from 92 in 2017.

“While we’re pleased with our results, we know quality is a race that never ends – and we’ll keep pushing to deliver even higher-quality vehicles for our customers,” said VanSlambrouck.

VW, Ford Start Joint Project

Volkswagen AG and Ford Motor Company last week announced they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding and are exploring a strategic alliance designed to strengthen each company’s competitiveness and better serve customers globally.

The companies are exploring potential projects across a number of areas – including developing a range of commercial vehicles together to better serve the evolving needs of customers, said Ford spokeswoman Jennifer Flake. The potential alliance would not involve equity arrangements, including cross ownership stakes.

“Ford is committed to improving our fitness as a business and leveraging adaptive business models – which include working with partners to improve our effectiveness and efficiency,” said Jim Farley, Ford’s president of Global Markets. “This potential alliance with the Volkswagen

Group is another example of how we can become more fit as a business, while creating a winning global product portfolio and extending our capabilities.

“We look forward to exploring with the Volkswagen team in the days ahead how we might work together to better serve the evolving needs of commercial vehicle customers.”

“Markets and customer demand are changing at an incredible speed. Both companies have strong and complementary positions in different commercial vehicle segments already,” said Dr. Thomas Sedran, head of Volkswagen Group Strategy.

“To adapt to the challenging environment, it is of utmost importance to gain flexibility through alliances. This is a core element of our Volkswagen Group Strategy 2025. The potential industrial cooperation with Ford is seen as an opportunity to improve competitiveness of both companies globally.”

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