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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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CONTACTS:

Cheryle Jackson	312/814.3158 (office)
Abby Ottenhoff	312/814.3158 (office)
Rebecca Rausch	217/782.7355 (office)
Andrew Ross	312/636.1747 (DCEO)
Anne Marie Gattari	313/323.7809 (Ford)

GOVERNOR BLAGOJEVICH PRAISES OPENING OF FORD MOTOR COMPANY'S RENOVATED OPERATING PLANT AND NEW CHICAGO MANUFACTURING CAMPUS

State's Support and \$800 Million In Private Investment Will Help Create More Than 1,400 Good Illinois Jobs

CHICAGO – Governor Rod Blagojevich congratulated Ford Motor Company on the completion of its recently renovated and retooled Chicago Assembly Plant and the opening of the 155-acre Chicago Manufacturing Campus, which is bringing in twelve Ford suppliers and more than 1,400 new jobs into Illinois. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has invested with Ford and its suppliers to help make both of these important projects a reality. DCEO Director Jack Lavin represented Governor Blagojevich at the event.

"I am proud that the State of Illinois has wisely invested in this innovative manufacturing system, which will create good paying jobs in this area for years to come. This successful partnership between the state, the City of Chicago and Ford Motor Company proves that Illinois can offer major manufacturers a welcoming business climate and a well-educated, well-prepared workforce that can help those businesses stay competitive and grow in the global market," Governor Blagojevich said.

Chicago Assembly Plant today unveiled its new flexible manufacturing system with the production of three distinct models built on one vehicle platform. Opened in 1924, Chicago Assembly is Ford's oldest operating plant in the world. Today, it uses the industry's latest technology in machine tooling and processes to build the all-new 2005 Ford Five Hundred, Ford Freestyle and Mercury Montego. With its flexible body shop and final assembly area, the plant can employ the new flexible tooling to quickly change over and build up to eight different models on two vehicle platforms.

DCEO has worked with Ford to upgrade the quality of its workforce by providing **\$5.7 million** in Employer Training Investment Program (ETIP) funds to train more 8,500 existing employees and 500 new workers in a variety of fields, including calibration software, robotics, welding and safety. The ETIP program reimburses companies and organizations for up to 50 percent of the costs of training their employees. Since this plant is located in an Enterprise Zone, Ford is receiving additional financial incentives. DCEO also is prepared to commit additional money to help Ford build a new training facility.

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"Chicago Assembly sets a new standard in today's fiercely competitive market," said Greg Smith, Executive Vice President and President of the Americas. "The flexible manufacturing system installed here means we can respond quickly to changes in customer demand and do so efficiently. And our supplier manufacturing campus supports our flexible manufacturing system with quick customer response time as well as lower inventory and shipping costs."

The Chicago Manufacturing Campus marked its official opening today. It is the industry's largest in size and scope and Ford's first in the United States. Twelve suppliers, totaling 1.5 million square feet of manufacturing and office space, are producing parts at the 155-acre site, just one-half mile from the plant. Among the suppliers are Brose North America Inc. (door components); Lear Corp. (headliners); Plastech Engineered Products Inc. (injected and blow molded plastics); S-Y Systems Technologies America LLC, (wiring); Tower Automotive Inc. (stampings); Visteon Corp. (instrument panels, bolsters, HVAC components and fuel tanks); and ZF Lemforder Corp. (suspension). Also on the campus are Summit Polymers Inc. (injected plastics) as well as TDS Automotive and its subsidiaries, Decoma International Inc., Flex-N-Gate and Facil US. The Ford Parts Distribution Center is also located on the campus.

Several of the suppliers are receiving almost **\$11.8 million** in Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) tax credits over a ten year period based on creating almost 1,000 new jobs. But these various companies plan on creating more than 1,400 new positions. DCEO also provided **\$4.8 million** in Large Business Development Program funds that were used for construction, leasehold improvements and to purchase equipment. Almost **\$800,000** in ETIP funds have already trained 500 existing employees at four of the suppliers in die set up, lean manufacturing and safety. The Illinois Department of Transportation invested almost **\$55 million** for road and railroad improvements at the both the plant and the campus.

Approximately \$800 million was invested by Ford Motor Company and its suppliers in the assembly plant, the supplier manufacturing site and Chicago Stamping Plant, which provides stampings for Chicago Assembly.

"This is a fantastic day for the City of Chicago and the State of Illinois. Not only are more than 1,400 new jobs being created, but we are also sending a strong signal to companies in our state and across the country that Illinois will continue helping businesses grow and prosper," State Senator Donne Trotter (D-Chicago) said.

"Ford and its suppliers are committed to expanding their operations here in Illinois, and Governor Blagojevich and I are also committed to doing everything we can to create more opportunities like these that will further enhance our economic recovery. Illinois has everything a company, both large and small, could want – a skilled, educated and motivated workforce, first-class infrastructure, tremendous quality of life and the economic development programs that can attract \$800 million in private investment and more than 1,400 new jobs," DCEO Director Jack Lavin said.

Ford Motor Company, headquartered in Dearborn, Mich., is one of the world's largest automakers, with approximately 318,000 employees in 200 markets on six continents. Its automotive brands include Aston Martin, Ford, Jaguar, Land Rover, Lincoln, Mazda, Mercury and Volvo. Its automotive-related services include Ford Credit, Quality Care and Hertz. Ford Motor Company observed its 100th anniversary on June 16, 2003.

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