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Alabama Development Office

Honda Plans \$40 Million Expansion in Alabama

LINCOLN -- Honda officials said this month that the company will expand its Alabama manufacturing facility again, planning a \$40 million project to enlarge its operations here.

The project will add more than 41,000-square-feet to the facility and 20 new jobs. The company will add new high-pressure and low-pressure aluminum die cast equipment and furnaces, low-pressure heat treatment and additional sand mold capabilities. The expansion will allow Honda to produce more engine components within the plant.

Honda has expanded several times since the company opened its first assembly line in Alabama in November of 2001. The company has added an engine plant, a second assembly line, and has nearly completed a \$70 million expansion of its original engine factory.



The company plans to stagger the installation and implementation of the new new engine making equipment, starting with the new high-pressure operation in fall 2007. The low-pressure expansion is expected to be running by mid-2008.

Honda makes the Odyssey minivan and the Pilot sport utility vehicle along with the V-6 engines that go in them. The \$1.3 billion plant employs 4,500 people and can produce 300,000 vehicles and engines each year.

"Our Alabama facility continues to play a strong role in Honda's North American engine and vehicle manufacturing operations," said Takashi Yamamoto, president of the plant.

State on Road To Success in Auto Growth

Alabama's auto manufacturers have the state on the road to success into the next decade, according to a leading industry forecaster.

Mike Jackson, director of North America Vehicle Forecasts at CSM Worldwide Inc., predicted strong growth for all of the companies that have opened automotive plants in Alabama. He said by the year 2012, Mercedes-Benz parent company Daimler Chrysler, Honda, Hyundai, and Toyota will see significant growth in their share of the nation's auto sales.

Jackson said the South accounted for 16 percent of the nation's auto production in 1993. That number will be 26 percent by 2012, he said. He said production in Alabama will climb by 111 percent by 2012 compared to last year's levels, accounting for one-quarter of the auto assembly in the South.

Metal Stamping Company Brings Jobs to Chambers County

CUSSETA -- Great Lakes Metal Stamping Inc. has announced plans to locate a manufacturing facility in the Cussetta Industrial Park in Chambers County. The company will produce stamped metal components along with welded and mechanically fastened sub-assemblies for the rapidly growing automotive industry in the South.

The company will invest \$3.5 million in the project and employ more than 50 people when the plant is fully operational. Construction has begun and is expected to be completed in March of 2007.

Alabama Workforce Training Program Named Best in Nation

MONTGOMERY -- *Expansion Management* magazine has ranked Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) number one among workforce training programs, the latest in a string of accolades recognizing the state's economic development efforts.

The magazine's August issue ranked AIDT number one based on a national poll of site selection consultants. The agency has consistently ranked in the magazine's top 10 and previously scored first place in 2004.

"Alabama has become a national leader in many areas, especially when it comes to our economy," said Gov. Bob Riley.

"This award is further proof of the successes we're having and the strides we've made," he continued. A high quality work force is our state's number one selling point when it comes to recruiting companies. Being consistently ranked at the top in workforce training is tremendously helpful to our economic development efforts."

Biotech Research Center Moves Closer to Goal

HUNTSVILLE -- Jim Hudson's vision for this city's new Hudson-Alpha Institute for Biotechnology includes a program to attract Alabama students to the field of biotechnology.

That vision became a step closer to reality this month when the Institute hired a director of educational research, Dr. Neil Lamb.

"Bolstering the education of Alabama students and teachers in the increasingly important field of biotechnology is a crucial role of the Hudson-Alpha Institute," said Hudson, the institute's president. "Dr. Lamb is an ideal fit for this position based on his Ph.D. in genetics and molecular biology and his past work in educational outreach."

Dr. Lamb served as director of education for the Department of Human Genetics at Emory University in Atlanta before he started to work for the Hudson-Alpha Institute on August 1.



The Hudson-Alpha Institute for Biotechnology

The Hudson-Alpha Institute was announced in August of 2005 and broke ground in the Cummings Research Park in January. The Institute is expected to have between 500 and 600 workers when it opens and expand to about 1,600 people working on the campus with affiliated companies within 10 years.

Lockheed Martin Breaks Ground for Huntsville Expansion

HUNTSVILLE -- Local, state and federal officials joined Lockheed Martin Corp. here this month to break ground for the company's new \$30 million Huntsville operation.

The company was the first to build in the Cummings Research park and began operations with 12 employees in 1962, according to Bob Drolet, director of Lockheed Martin Huntsville Operations. The company now employs almost 550 people in the area. Mr. Drolet said the company is expected to grow by 15 to 20 percent during the next year of operations.

Dr. Bob Trice, senior vice president of business development, Lockheed Martin, said there were few people who could envision the company's growth in Huntsville when the company became the first operation in the park more than 40 years ago.

Gov. Bob Riley said that the company is "a great economic development benefit for this community and this

state, and for that I'm very appreciative." He praised the company's employees "for what you do for our fighting men and women." The company's work helps make "the fight for freedom a reality," he said.

Lockheed Martin Huntsville Operations provides program management and engineering for key missile defense contracts and is the site of the company's Battle Management Center of Excellence.

Others making remarks at the groundbreaking were U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions, U.S. Reps. Bud Cramer and Robert Aderholt, Huntsville Mayor Loretta Spencer, and Madison County Commission Chairman Mike Gillespie.

Construction of the office building is scheduled to start later this month, subject to final negotiations between Lockheed Martin and Sunnyvale II development group of Huntsville. The building will be the eighth at Lockheed Martin's 80-acre campus in Huntsville.



Hyundai Meeting

Gov. Bob Riley, left, talks with Hyundai-Kia Automotive Group chairman Chung Mong-koo, during his visit to the company's headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, last month. Gov. Riley and 31 sponsors from Alabama conducted a seminar to introduce the state to potential new Kia suppliers and held a dinner for about 60 automotive executives afterwards.

Hyundai's decision to build its first U.S. plant in Montgomery was part of an overall strategy to boost the automaker's global image that is paying off. Hyundai recently ranked 75th on the Best Global Brands list, up from 84th where it made its debut on the rankings one year ago. The survey was conducted by Businessweek and Interbrand. With a brand value of \$4.1 billion, Hyundai ranked ahead of Porsche, Nissan and Lexus among automakers.

Marshall Takes Lead Role in Lunar Return

HUNTSVILLE -- Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville is taking a lead role in rocket testing to send astronauts back to the moon.

Engineers started the testing here this month and fired the engine for the full scheduled seven seconds. It was just a small test engine with 20,000 pounds of thrust. The real engine will need 200,000 pounds of thrust and must fire for several minutes to push the space agency's shuttle replacement to the International Space Station or the moon.

Marshall has to design two rockets, one for carrying astronauts and another for carrying cargo. The Huntsville center is also in charge of a pair of robotic landers that will precede humans to the lunar surface. NASA also must design and build the crew vehicle and a lunar lander.

Much of the work is up to Marshall. Of the 660 civil servants working on the program, more than 500 are working at Marshall and an equal number are contract workers.

"The responsibility for the design and integration of Ares I and Ares 2 hark back to Apollo, the last time we had that responsibility," said Steve Cook, exploration launch projects director at Marshall. "We're going back to our roots of being the rocket city."

Thousands of tests lie ahead for the engineers. Many already have quietly begun on renovated test stands, in a wind tunnel, a welding

laboratory and inside computers that the designers of the shuttle and the Saturn rockets never had.

NASA will select a contractor to build the crew spacecraft within 30 days with plans to retire the aging shuttles as soon as possible. Officials said they believe the program will succeed where previous efforts to repeat the success of Apollo have failed. The prospect of returning to the glory days of the Apollo has workers here fired up like one of their engines.

"The biggest problem I have is getting people to go home at night," said Don Krupp, chief of the vehicle analysis branch. "This is a multigenerational program. We have a work force itching to get on with the job."



Nissan Honors Topre as Top U.S. Supplier

CULLMAN -- Nissan North America has honored Topre America Corp. of Cullman as one of its top three suppliers in the United States.

The award was presented to Topre President Hiroshi Chiba and Cullman Plant Manager Dwayne O'Cull during Nissan's Annual Supplier Quality Seminar and Awards Event in Nashville.

"The Nissan Corporation has approximately 490 suppliers and we are in the top three," said O'Cull. "That's

an amazing accomplishment, especially if you consider this is an award that usually isn't given to someone in the stamping industry."

O'Cull said the credit for the award lies with the 200-plus associates at Topre America. The awards are presented to suppliers based on a year-long evaluation of their systems, incoming quality, response time, pricing, design support, timely shipments, product performance and complexity, warranty and Nissan's own vehicle evaluation system.

Auto Stamping Company Locates in Cullman

CULLMAN -- Officials gathered here recently to announce that Advance Heat Treat Corp. (AHT) will construct a new plant in the Cullman Industrial Park III and initially employ 20 people. Capital investment for the project is between \$6-7 million.

The company specializes in high-tech surface treatments for production parts and tools, including large automotive stamping dies. "We looked at where our customers are and where our potential customers are," said company President and CEO Gary Sharp. "We also looked at Alabama and surrounding states, their infrastructure and how well they supported industry. We concluded Alabama was the place to be."

Sharp said it has been obvious in recent years that a lot of automotive industries and members of AHT's customer base are moving in this direction. "And they are doing so because of the good work ethic down here and the ability to train individuals to do the work." He said there is opportunity for the Cullman plant to be the company's largest facility.



ADO Project Manager David Echols, left, and State Rep. Neal Morrison present an Alabama State Seal and State Flag to company President Gary Sharp.