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**Ford Motor Company's Michigan Truck Plant Body Shop Now Features Flexible  
Manufacturing**

**By Jenny McLane**

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Ford Motor Company is headquartered in Dearborn, Michigan. It 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.

Ford Motor Company has announced that they shall be investing \$300,000 in a 240,000-square-foot, flexible body shop expansion at the Michigan Truck Plant in Wayne, Michigan.

"This has been a tough, but gratifying year in manufacturing for Ford. We've transformed our plants to bring more products, faster to our customers," said Matt DeMars, Ford vice president, Vehicle Operations. "Our goal is to build stability and standardization into our North American assembly and stamping plants, which is what flexible and lean manufacturing is all about."

Ford has had a wonderful year in terms of sales and productions. Plus, they have launched a record number of vehicles the previous year and would like to sustain the rhythm for 2005. They are now doing well in trying to meet their previously stated commitment of infusing flexible manufacturing into 75% of its body manufacturing shops, trim and final assembly operations by the end of this decade. Flexibility in the body shops is the most crucial component of flexible manufacturing due to the complexity and the cost of the operation involved. Ford's innovative flexible body shop system requires less expenditure than both time-honored methods of traditional body shops and other devised flexible manufacturing systems.

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With last year's successful sales and production, Ford is hard pressed to surpass the impressive numbers they have previously posted. At the start of 2004 Ford launched an onslaught with production of the F-150 at the Dearborn Truck Plant; the Ford GT at the Wixom Assembly Plant; the Escape Hybrid at the Kansas City Assembly Plant; the Ford Five Hundred, Freestyle and Mercury Montego in Chicago; the Mercury Mariner at the Ohio Assembly Plant; and the Ford Mustang at AutoAlliance International. Ford plans to be just as aggressive to maintain if not surpass the same numbers as the preceding sales year.

DeMars credits their highly successful launches to the Ford Company's focus on quality; their well planned processes and to their manpower. The people behind the manufacturing of their vehicles are the heart of the whole operation. "We are committed to getting our launches right. We know that a strong launch is critical to a vehicle's success," he said. "The Ford Production System, our Launch Quality Operating Systems and our Safety Leadership Initiative are important tools in our manufacturing system."

The aforementioned Michigan Truck Plant produces the Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator. This particular plant employs more than 3,000 hourly employees. The addition of the flexible body plant will certainly expand the production capabilities of the plant. Details on future products that maybe produced on the truck plant will be announced at a future date.

"This is an extremely exciting time for this plant and for the employees here," said Gary Johnson, plant manager. "It reinforces to everyone our future, the long-term viability of the Michigan Truck Plant and our workforce. The new body shop expansion and flexible tooling give us a strong future with the capability of producing exciting new products."

This will also enable the Ford Motor Company to adjust with the ever changing market and do so at record speed. Plus, aside from being able to react more quickly they could also do this with significant cost savings. This is also in accordance to the company's dedication to its commitment in producing more products at a faster rate.

With today's ever changing needs and demands every company needs to be on its toes at all times. Any dilly dallying may cost dearly. Many auto manufacturers have been in hard work devising plans and methods on how to cope up and yet cut costs. These way customers are happy and manufacturers may still churn out profit.

Just like these auto manufacturers, Auto Parts Train is dedicated to its commitment to its clients in bringing only the best in quality Ford parts. They also always update their Ford car parts stocks so that they may cope up with the times ever changing needs. Many products are launched every year and with Auto Parts Trains' 25 years of experience in this field they know that they need to be aware at all times. Auto Parts Train always has its ears to the ground to keep up with all the new products in the market. They are devoted in only offering you the finest in top class Ford replacement parts. They have also searched all over to provide the first rate Ford collision parts, so that they can confidently say that they guarantee the quality and the fit of the entire Ford auto parts they possess.

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hotline and their highly trained and courteous customer service crew is on hand six days a week, 12 hours a day. Plus, if you're a non-California resident you don't have to pay sales tax! At Auto Parts Train you get high quality Ford performance parts and accessories at wholesale prices. You just can't beat that winning combination. Great service, high rated quality Ford auto parts, rock bottom prices, plus great and fast processing and delivery. You'll have your purchase in your front door in no time at all. Our 24 hour online store is open for you all the time;

<http://www.partstrain.com/ShopByVehicle/FORD> is the link to go to for your five star quality Ford part. With Auto Parts Train, you can never go wrong.

Jenny McLane is a 36 year old native of Iowa and has a knack for research on cars and anything and everything about it. She works full time as a Market Analyst for one of the leading car parts suppliers in the country today.

### **Retiring Vice Chairman Dominates Ford News**

**By Aurel Radulescu**

As of late, Ford news has surrounded the company announcement made earlier this year pertaining to the retirement of longtime Ford executive, Greg Smith. After starting out as an engineer with truck operations in 1973, Smith was atop Ford news as he moved up to Vice Chairman after more than 30 years with the company. Now, after 32 years of service, Smith has announced his retirement effective March 1, 2006.

"Greg has contributed tremendously to Ford Motor Company in many areas, including leading the turnaround at Ford Motor Credit," admits Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Bill Ford. "His deep knowledge of all aspects of the business has been extremely helpful as we've developed our plans for the future, and I'm pleased he will remain with us in a consulting role."

Upon joining Ford in 1973 as an engineer with truck operations, a recent Ford news release explains that Greg Smith also held several engineering and product planning positions within the company. In 1985, Smith moved to the Ford Division as Truck and Powertrain Marketing Plans manager before becoming the manager of Car Marketing Plans. Finally, he accepted the position of Central Region Marketing manager. Smith later went from the Ford Division to the Lincoln Mercury Division, which is where he became the Dallas District Operations manager.

After returning from Dallas in 1990, Smith was named Director of Strategy and Advanced Planning for car product development. Just three years later, in 1993, he was promoted to executive director of Strategic Planning and External Affairs for the Ford Financial Services Group. Following that, Smith was appointed President and Chief Operating Officer of Ford Motor Credit before being named the Chairman and CEO of Ford Motor Credit. In 2004, he became a company Executive Vice President and President of the Americas, which is a position that he held until he was elected Vice Chairman.

"Greg's respect for his fellow employees and his leadership behaviors are well known and highly regarded throughout the company," said Jim Padilla, Ford Motor Company president and Chief Operating Officer. According to a recent Ford news release, Padilla added, "We appreciate his many

contributions and will greatly miss his knowledge and insight."

As Vice Chairman, Smith was responsible for a variety of company operations, including the direction of central corporate staffs. Among others, he was responsible for directing the departments of Human Resources and Labor Affairs, Corporate Strategy and Information Technology and Automotive Strategy. As Vice Chairman, Greg Smith was a regular participant in Ford news releases, as well as being in charge of guiding Ford Motor Company's strategic development, considering and enforcing key decisions and defining its future financial services.

From new automobiles to racing and even to retirement, Ford news is widely read by auto enthusiasts worldwide. Wherever automotive happenings occur, it is almost certain to include some type of Ford news in the mix.

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