

A buzz abounds: Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Texas overhauls Visitors Center, plants pollinator garden

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SAN ANTONIO (April 20, 2018) – There’s a buzz flying through the air at Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Texas, Inc. (TMMTX). No, we’re not talking about flying trucks, rather the new pollinator garden and completely overhauled Visitors Center exhibits at the San Antonio facility. Today, company executives, team members and community leaders joined to celebrate completion of the more than \$1 million project.

“This top-to-bottom remodel of our Visitors Center will provide an interactive look at what we do here at TMMTX,” said David Crouch, vice president, TMMTX. “Guests will get hands-on experience with exhibits such as a paint simulator that tests their painting skills, and how to spot defects when they step into the quality area. We hope to inspire our next generation to learn more about STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) and skilled labor jobs.”

Other exhibits also give visitors a taste of what it takes to be a team member, or an “industrial athlete,” as Toyota calls its team members. This includes a rope-game competition that showcases fundamental skills needed, operating a lift assist to pick up a truck seat, and a penny press to model the stamping process and provides a souvenir.

In addition, guests will get up close to an automated-guided vehicle, as well as see several historic and one-of-a-kind Toyota trucks including a 1969 Land Cruiser, 1971 Hi-Lux and the "Back to the Future" Tacoma.

Promoting Pollinators

Just outside the Visitors Center sits the new 11,000 sq. ft. pollinator garden. TMMTX's environmental team worked with Texas Parks and Wildlife and the San Antonio Zoo to fill the garden with 250 native plants that will attract pollinators such as bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other insects.

“We want people to know that planting just one plant that pollinators enjoy helps,” said Rob Franklin, environmental director, TMMTX. "This garden is part of our commitment to protecting biodiversity and supporting local species, here in Texas and at our facilities across North America.”

Pollinators are crucial because they feed from flowers and transfer pollen which allows flowers and plants to produce seeds, fruits and vegetables. Approximately one out of every three bites of food you eat depends on the work of a pollinator. Unfortunately, pesticide usage and other factors harm pollinators.

Aside from planting native flowering plants, such as milkweed, in support of pollinators, people can install houses for bats and bees, supply salt or mineral licks for butterflies and water for all wildlife, and reduce pesticide use.

TMMTX leaders also announced they’ll partner with the San Antonio Zoo to plant pollinator gardens at six local high schools. Those schools will also be provided educational resources and programming for students to learn about the importance of pollinators in our environment.