How Toyota Mississippi Has Helped Shape the Corolla’s 60-Year Legacy

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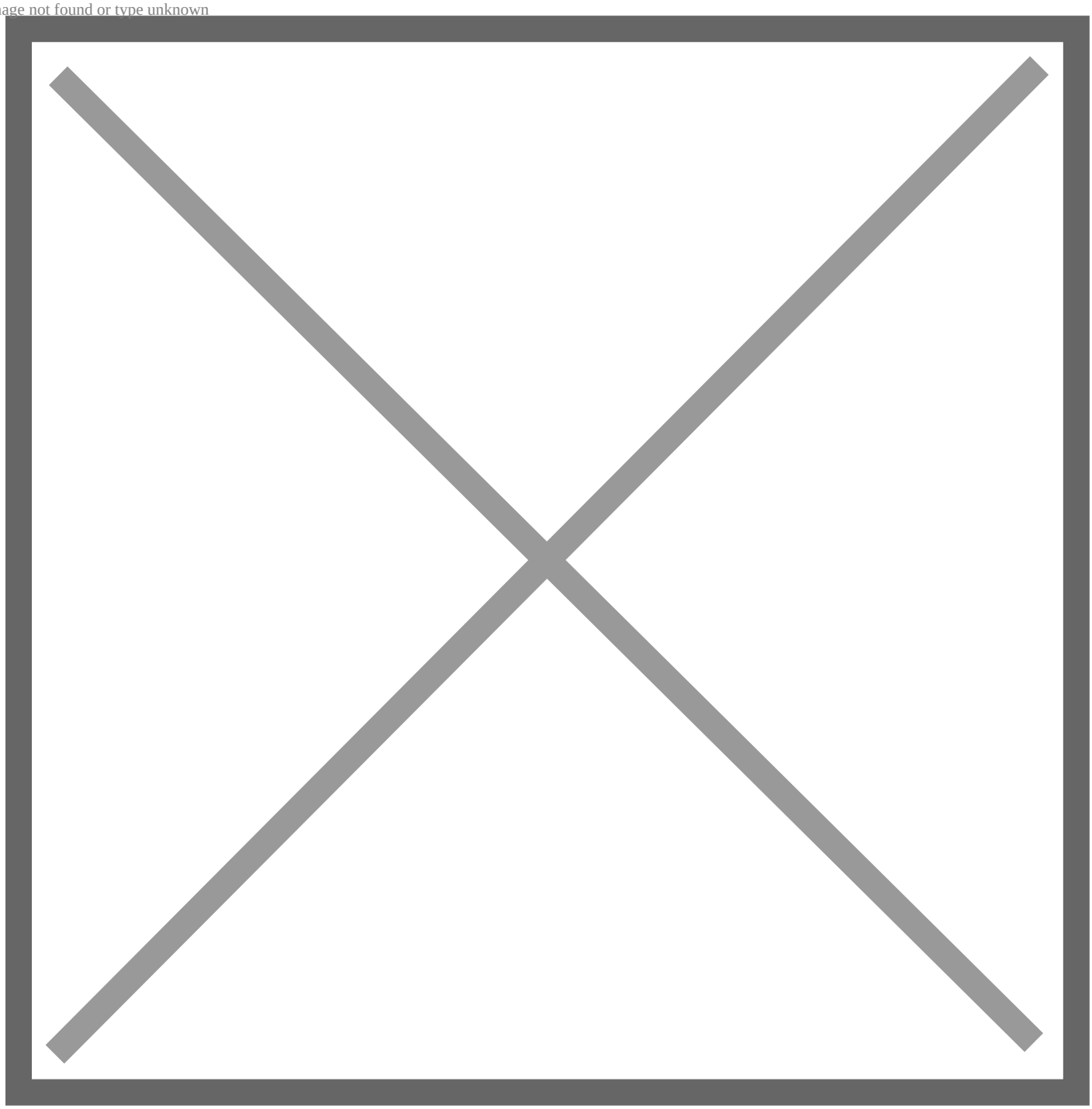
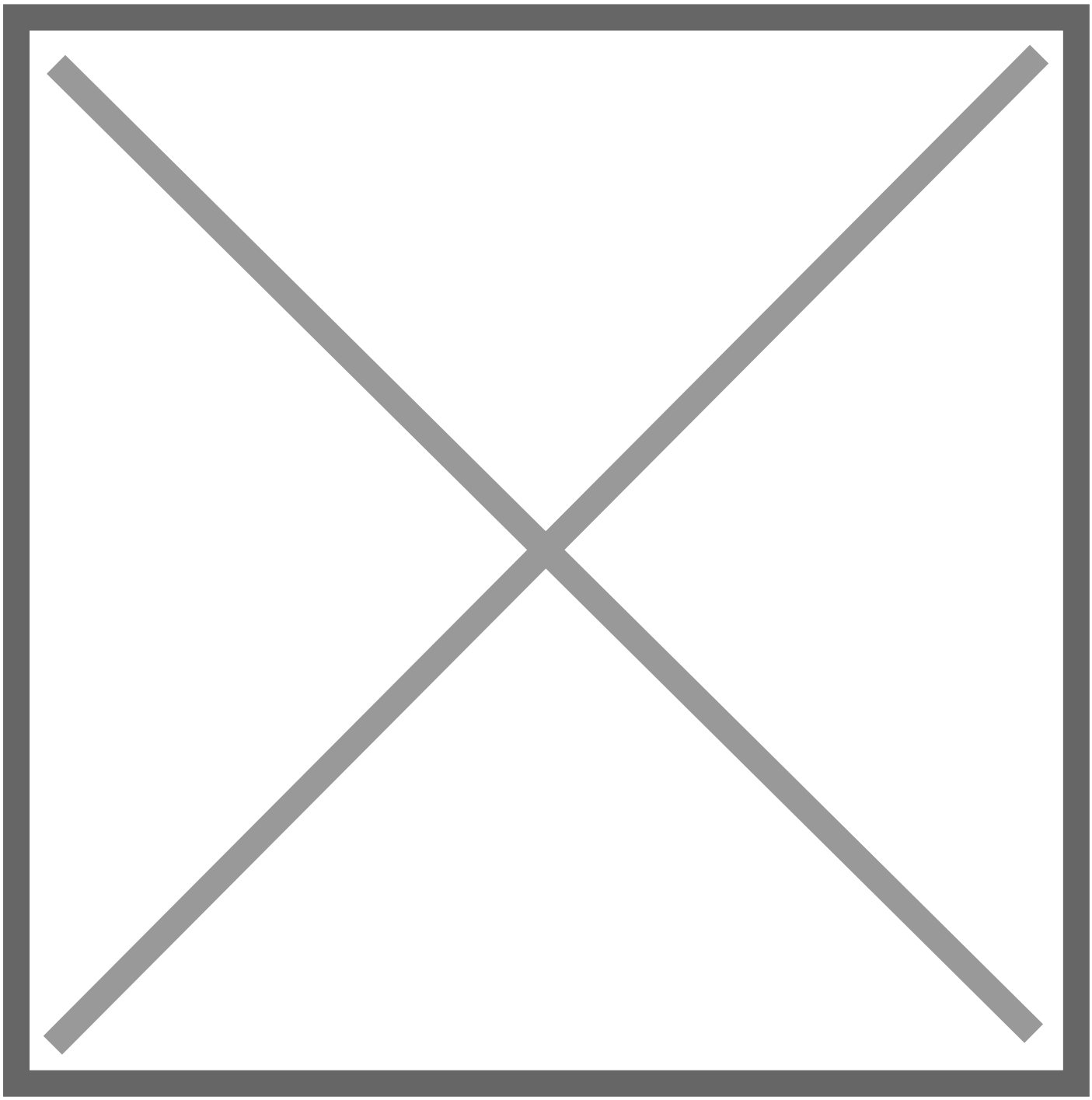


For six decades, the Toyota Corolla has earned its place as a go-to sedan, winning over drivers with the reliability, efficiency and quality they count on.

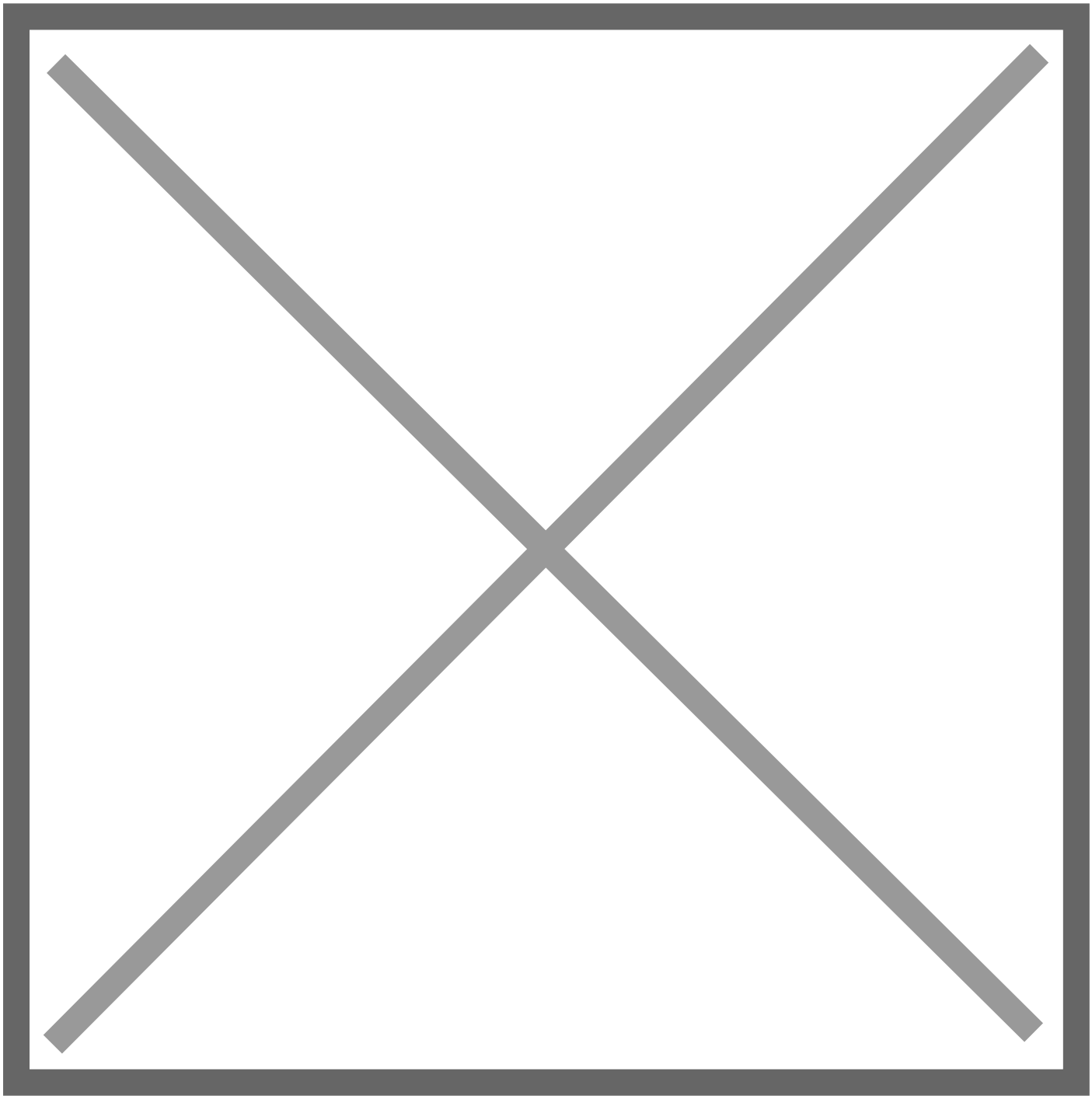
Now, as the compact sedan celebrates its 60th anniversary, its North American story leads to Blue Springs, Mississippi. For the past decade and a half, the community has been home to some of the people who bring this longstanding vehicle to life.

Since breaking ground in 2007 and beginning production in 2011, Toyota Mississippi has grown to currently employ 2,400 team members and has invested over $1.3 billion in the state's economy. The Magnolia State manufacturing plant solely assembles the Toyota Corolla, averaging more than 180,000 units per year and climbing.



The numbers tell only part of the story. Behind every Corolla is a team whose skill, pride and dedication help drive the plant’s operations — and help carry an automotive icon into its next decade.

Impactful Workforce

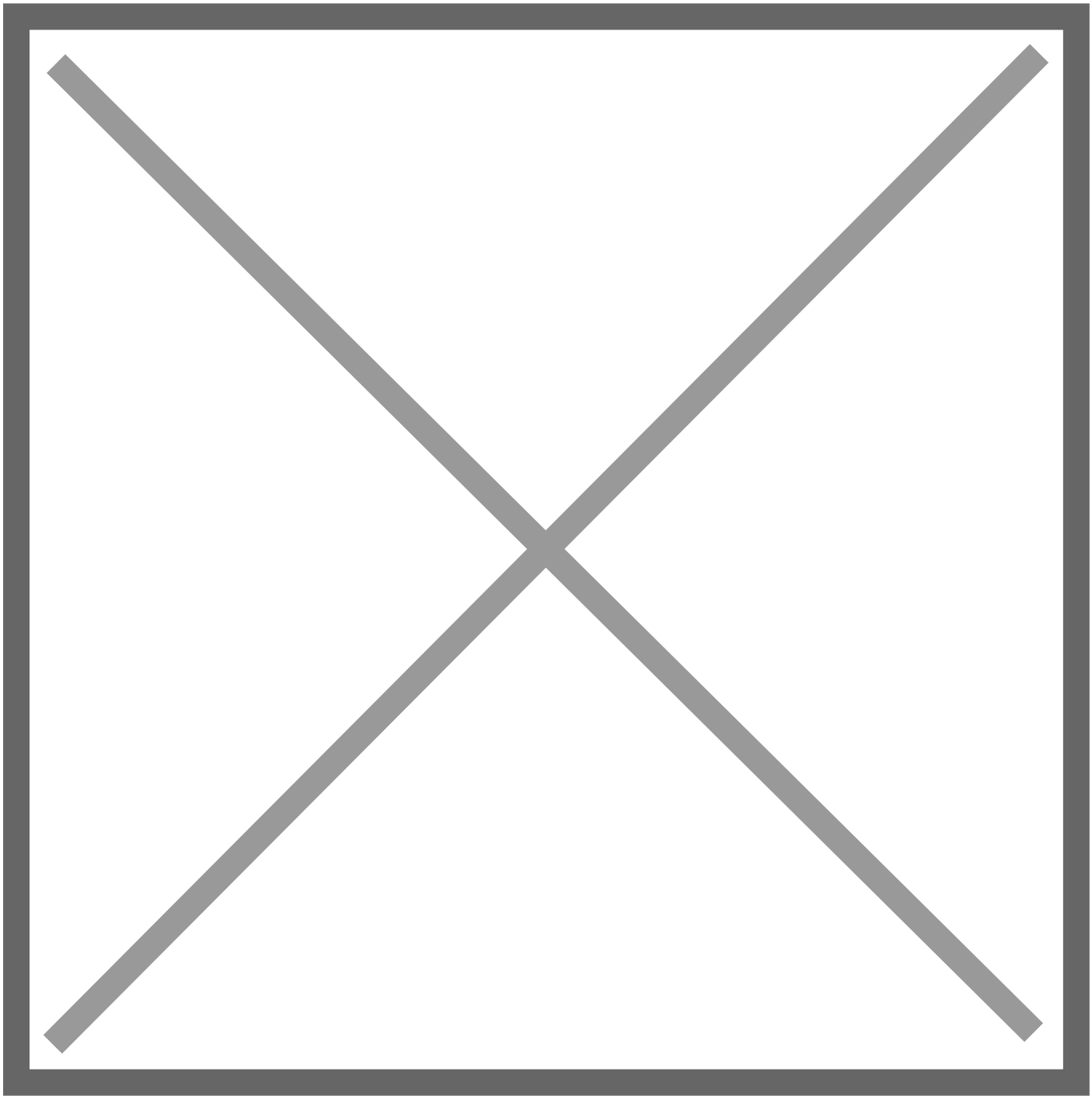


Before a Corolla leaves the plant, it goes through a process to ensure its safety, reliability and quality.

Employees like Melissa Roberts, a quality control group leader in vehicle performance, help kickstart Corolla's assembly. Roberts started as a temp in 2012 and has been at Toyota for 14 years.

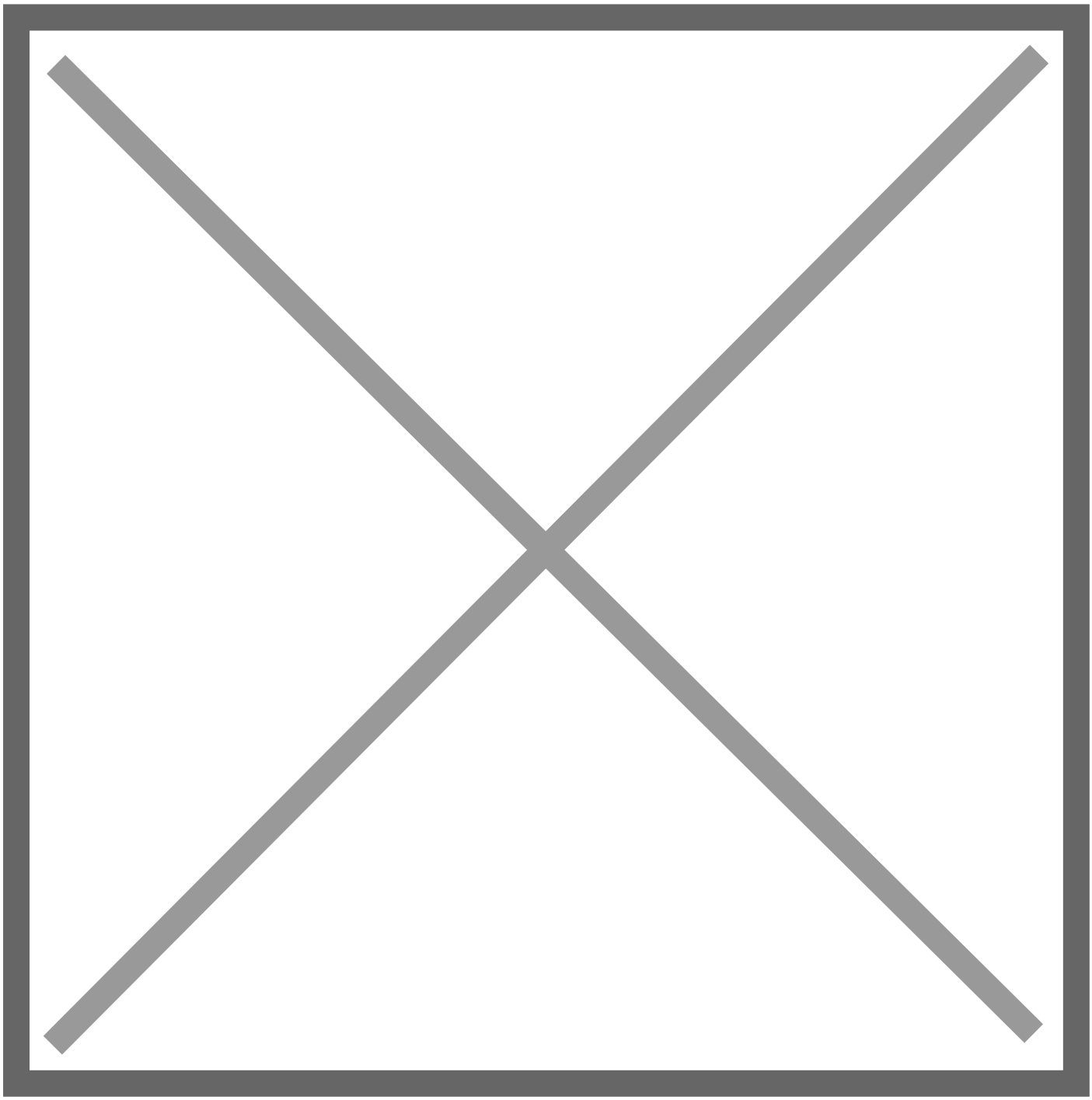
"I believe I have the absolute best job in the plant and the best team," says Roberts. "Every day we look for opportunities to improve our processes — whether that's identifying the root cause of issues or sharing ideas during our team meetings and discussions or simply helping each other find a better way to do the job."

Building on a Legacy



Roberts said she also believes there’s a sense of pride that permeates throughout Toyota Mississippi.

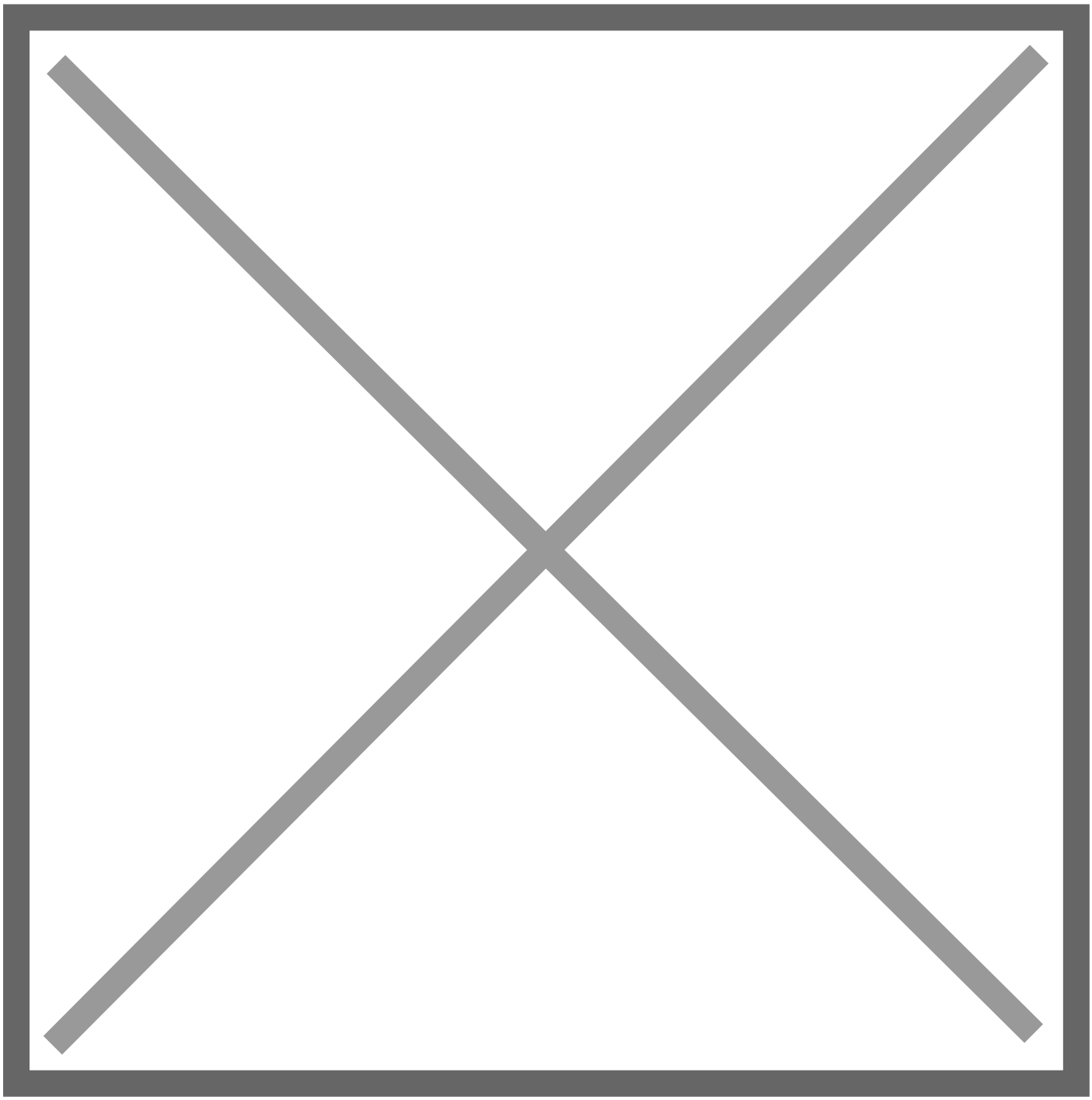
“It’s an incredible feeling to know that something we assemble here in Mississippi is trusted by millions of people around the world,” she says. “Every Corolla that leaves our plant represents all our hard work, our dedication and pride of our entire team. Knowing that some families rely on vehicles that I’ve had a part in being able to provide to them gives me a real sense of purpose. Being part of Corolla’s 60-year legacy is an honor and I’m very proud that our work here in Mississippi continues to show that tradition of excellence.”



JD Morris, a senior manager for production and quality control at Toyota Mississippi who has spent over 15 and a half years at Toyota, also said there's a sense of pride that comes with working together toward a common goal.

"When you are out here and see the team members working and assembling this Corolla, everybody understands it's a very important vehicle to Toyota," he says. "We assemble a car that can be used by different people in different stages of life. So, we're able to impact many people throughout our process."

Driving Culture and Community Forward



The plant’s impact extends far beyond its walls. Jeneen Horton, a general manager of manufacturing, knows this firsthand after eight years with Toyota Mississippi.

Horton oversees four production shops: press, body weld, paint and assembly. She also helps manage maintenance and manufacturing development.

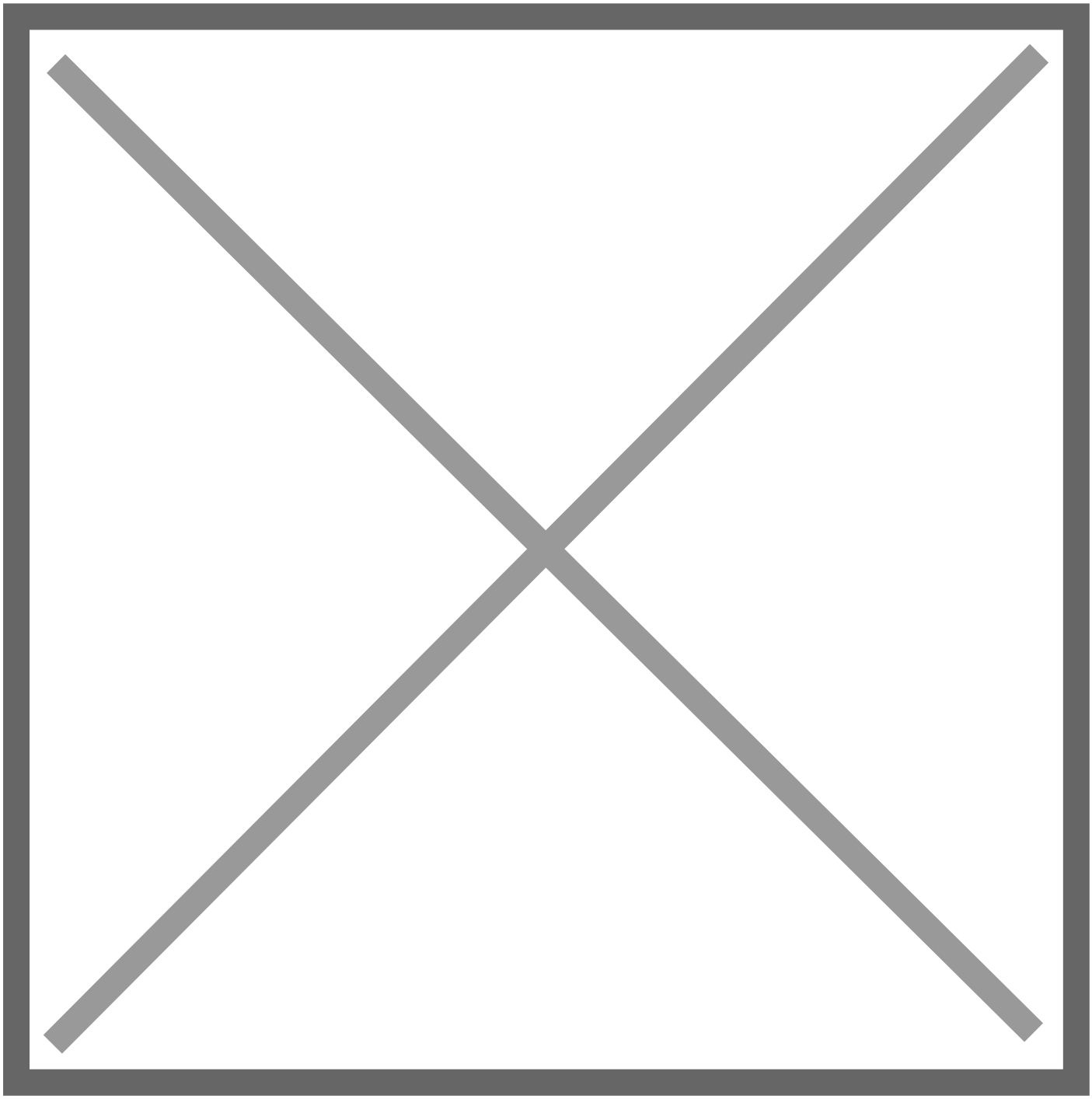
“I enjoy helping people and working with team members — especially new engineers coming into the field,” she says.

After starting at the Alabama engine plant in 2002, where she worked for 16 years before joining Toyota Mississippi, Horton has seen Toyota’s community impact.

From building skateboards and bicycles that were donated to communities to setting up tents filled with essentials for employees and their families following major storms, Horton has witnessed Toyota’s commitment to serve the communities in which it operates.

“I think we are always here to help in times of need, but we are also, in my opinion, big on helping the community,” Horton says.

Fueling the Next Generation



Morris, who’s worked at the Mississippi plant since it opened, said it has been exciting watching the sedan’s transformations.

“Being able to see the Corolla as a vehicle evolve and adapt to what’s needed from the marketplace has been really interesting,” he says. “It’s been rewarding to understand customers’ perspectives and needs, deliver what they want and watch those needs evolve positively over the years.”

The native Mississippian said Toyota supporting the next generation is important to the community.

“We have different programs inside and outside Toyota. There’s the maintenance apprenticeship program, co-ops, interns, the 4T Academy and we have summer temporary support on the line. We have activities that focus on training our team members internally and also programs for students who may be the next generation of Toyota,” he says. “I believe Toyota will continue to make a positive difference here in Mississippi for our team members and for our community.”

To help meet the growing demand for hybrid vehicles, Toyota Mississippi will add the hybrid-electric Corolla to its manufacturing operations, marking the first electrified Corollas assembled in the U.S. A sign, no doubt, of the impact that Toyota Mississippi will continue to have on the global nameplate.