

30 Years After Groundbreaking, Toyota Kentucky Proves Age is Only a Number

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Georgetown, Ky. (June 8, 2016) – It started with an announcement in December 1985. Today it is a bustling operation that employs 8,000 people, sprawls 169 football fields (that’s just the building!) and represents a \$6 billion (and growing) investment.

When Dr. Shoichiro Toyoda announced Scott County, Ky. as the site for Toyota’s first wholly-owned vehicle manufacturing plant in the U.S., he called it one of the proudest moments since the company produced its first prototype vehicle.

Since then, there has been no shortage of proud moments, says Wil James, president of Toyota’s largest plant in the world and one of the first 300 employees to join the Kentucky team. “Those first few days on the job, I could not imagine we were only a few months away from building our first car. But in May 1988, the first Camry came off the line, just like we said it would. I knew then this plant was going to be a really special place.”

Now, annual production at Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Kentucky, Inc. (TMMK) can top 550,000 vehicles and 600,000 engines. The vehicles manufactured in Georgetown have some of the highest locally-based content, up to 75 percent, including the Camry. The plant also produces the prestigious Lexus brand, after opening an all-new line in 2015.

And at a community celebration event today at the newly renovated Visitor Center, James outlined upcoming advancements that will help prepare the 30-year old plant for the next 30 years of car-building... and beyond.

Aging gracefully? Not a chance

With construction underway on a new production engineering campus that is expected to be completed in 2017, Toyota will soon relocate about 300 engineering positions to Georgetown. The 250,000 sq. ft. building will include a state-of-the-art test lab and provide an innovative work space for a total of approximately 700 employees. This expansion represents a local investment of \$80 million.

Additionally, over the next three years, TMMK is considering plans to undergo a major plant makeover that would include significant changes, such as renovation or replacement of aging equipment and constructing an all-new paint shop.

The plant is also evaluating opportunities to implement new technologies that will streamline production processes, improve part handling and logistics and increase production flexibility. “For us, change is natural. It’s what we do,” said James. “Most importantly, changes like this will allow us to build ever-better cars for our customers.”

James and other members of the TMMK team donned shades during the ceremony to demonstrate “Toyota’s bright future in Kentucky.” But they’re not the only ones optimistic about the plant. A recent study completed by the Center for Automotive Research indicates that every Toyota job in Kentucky creates nearly three more across the Commonwealth. As of 2015, Toyota’s workforce made up 1.3 percent of the state’s total employment, and its payroll of more than \$1.9 billion accounted for 1.6 percent of Kentucky’s total compensation.

“Toyota has had a powerful impact on Kentucky’s economy over the past 30 years,” said Governor Matt Bevin. “Continued investment in the Georgetown plant, including the production line for the first Lexus made in the U.S., has put the Commonwealth on the map as a top state for automotive manufacturing. Add to that the more than \$120 million invested in local communities, there is no doubt Toyota is a strong community partner. We are truly grateful to have them in Kentucky.”

Being a Good Neighbor

To mark the 30-year milestone, more than \$100,000 will go to charitable organizations in celebration of Toyota's three decades of being part of the community. TMMK will donate \$30,000 to a local VEX robotics program. The funds will support more STEM opportunities for students at every level in Scott County.

The plant also will make donations of \$10,000 each to Quest Farm and LexPro, Central Kentucky non-profits focused on helping Kentuckians with disabilities, and a \$35,000 donation to Honor Flight Kentucky, a non-profit that pays for World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans to travel to Washington D.C. to visit memorials dedicated to their service and sacrifices. Additional donations will be announced later this year.