

Toyota Produces First Car at New Kentucky Plant [1988]

May 29, 2014

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[Toyota Celebrates 10-Millionth Vehicle Made in Kentucky \[2014\]](#)

GEORGETOWN, KENTUCKY, MAY 26, 1988 — Toyota Motor Manufacturing, U.S.A., Inc., today reached a major milestone at the new \$1.1 billion automobile manufacturing complex in Georgetown, Kentucky. An internal employee ceremony attended by approximately 1,100 employees celebrated the first Toyota Camry produced in Kentucky using newly installed equipment, processes, and the dedicated efforts of an American work force.

The car displayed represented achievement of the rigorous quality standards established by Toyota in Japan and was the first car produced during the pilot production period.

In addressing the employees, Kaneyoshi Kusunoki, president of Toyota Motor Manufacturing stressed the importance of team work. "This car is a symbol of our most important company principle, team work. For this reason, I have declared that our first car shall be preserved forever in Kentucky for our TMM Team Members. It is to remind us not only of what we have accomplished today, but more importantly, what we can achieve in the future through team work. I know you will overcome the challenges and TMM will soon earn a reputation worldwide as the producer of the "Quality Kentucky Camry."

There are currently around 1,100 employees at Toyota Motor Manufacturing. Ninety percent of those employees are from Kentucky. An additional 600 employees will be hired by the end of 1988. An additional 1,300 will be hired for a second shift which is scheduled to begin in summer 1989, and 500 employees will be hired for the Power Train Plant.

To date, 8 groups or 268 Team Leaders and Group Leaders have received four weeks of intensive training at the Tsutsumi plant in Toyota City, Japan. Training consisted of a combination of classroom instruction, observation of Group Leaders and Team Leaders in Japan and hands-on training by building cars on the production line in Japan. The goal of the training was to provide a thorough introduction to the Toyota Production System and develop a personal understanding of the important role each team member plays in achieving Toyota quality.

During the months of May and June, pilot production vehicles will be built at the Georgetown facility; emphasis will be on training and confirming product quality. As production increases in mid-July, emphasis will be on improving production efficiency and increasing volume. Early 1989, when full production is reached with one shift, production will be 400 cars per day.

In closing, Mr. Kusunoki also recognized the efforts of those individuals outside of Toyota that have made a significant contribution. "Let us not forget the support we have received as we recognize this accomplishment — the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the people of this community and our suppliers all who have contributed to this car."

On December 11, 1985, Toyota Motor Corporation announced the selection of Kentucky for the location of the first wholly owned automobile manufacturing facility in the United States. Ground breaking for the \$800 million automobile manufacturing plant followed on May 5 of the following year. A \$300 million expansion to add a Power Train Plant which will produce engines, axles and steering components was announced on November 9, 1987, bringing the total investment in Kentucky to \$1.1 billion. At full production, the plant will employ 3,500 and will produce 200,000 Camry sedans annually.

Toyota Motor Manufacturing, U.S.A., Inc., in Kentucky is a subsidiary of Toyota Motor Corporation in Japan, the third largest automobile manufacturer in the world.