

Toyota Indiana Launches the 2014 Highlander; Prepares for Hybrids and Exports

December 05, 2013

Image not found or type unknown



PRINCETON, Ind. (Dec. 5, 2013) – Hoosier pride was felt deep and wide on the plant floor of Toyota Motor Manufacturing, Indiana (TMMI) this morning as the company celebrated the start of production of the all-new 2014 Highlander.

TMMI team members and area citizens have much to celebrate, as the popular midsize SUV is responsible for \$430 million additional investment and more than 600 jobs at the Princeton automotive plant.

“Automotive manufacturers and suppliers around Indiana are putting their expansion plans into gear, creating jobs and more opportunities in every corner of the state,” said Indiana Lieutenant Governor Sue Ellspermann. “With Toyota’s launch of production for the new Highlander right here in the Hoosier State, we are witnessing an economy driving forward. From our world-class workforce to our low cost of doing business, Indiana proves daily that it is a state that works for automotive manufacturing.”

The Princeton plant builds a gas version of the Highlander and will begin producing the hybrid version early next year. Highlanders born in Indiana will find new homes with drivers in the Russian and Australian regions as TMMI expands its export reach.

Highlander export business allows for better utilization of the Indiana plant, and helps capitalize on the improving North American and global auto market. In addition to the new jobs created at the Indiana plant, this project increases opportunities and jobs for Toyota’s North American supply base.

2014 new Highlander features

- All-new exterior with three-row seating for up to eight,
- Increased cargo capacity,
- Three power train choices: a fuel-efficient four-cylinder engine, a powerful V-6 with a new six-speed transmission, and a V-6-powered Hybrid Synergy Drive,
- Entune Audio with Bluetooth phone and streaming music and touch-screen display,
- Integrated backup camera,
- STAR Safety System, includes Enhanced Vehicle Stability Control, Traction Control, Anti-Lock Brake System, Electronic Brake-Force Distribution, Brake assist and Smart Stop Technology,
- Adjustable height power rear liftgate and flip-up rear hatch window, and
- Eight-way power driver seat.

“The all-new Highlander is a dynamic, stylish SUV and its quality craftsmanship and the fact that it will be exported to the Russian and Australian markets is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team members,” TMMI President Norm Bafunno said. “This really is a milestone for our entire team,”

Sheila Showalter, Quality Assurance team leader, couldn’t agree more. “When I started here 16 years ago, I was one of 1,300 team members in the West Plant and we were only building the Tundra. It is exciting to be a part of something this big.”

Representing a \$4.2 billion investment, TMMI currently employs about 4,500. By the end of 2014, **Toyota will directly employ 4,700 team members.** The Princeton plant also produces the Sequoia full-size SUV and Sienna minivan.