

Automaker Taps Seasoned Manufacturing Leaders to Drive North Carolina Operations

June 21, 2022

LIBERTY, N.C. (June 21, 2022) – Toyota today announced the team that will launch its newest plant in North America, Toyota Battery Manufacturing, North Carolina (TBMNC). The plant represents a \$1.29 billion investment and will be the first to produce lithium-ion batteries for Toyota in North America.

Meet Sean Suggs, President

Suggs will be responsible for all manufacturing and administration functions, reporting to Norm Bafunno, senior vice president, Unit Manufacturing and Engineering, Toyota Motor North America (TMNA).

Under his leadership, TBMNC will employ 1,750 and house four production lines capable of delivering enough lithium-ion batteries for 200,000 vehicles each year beginning in 2025. Suggs will also manage facility expansion to at least six production lines with the capacity to produce batteries for up to 1.2 million vehicles a year.

Suggs began his Toyota career in 1998 as a team leader at Toyota Indiana after proudly serving in the United States Army for eight years. He has held several subsequent roles including serving as president of Toyota's Mississippi plant and most recently as TMNA's group vice president and chief social innovation officer.

Meet Don Stewart, Vice President of Manufacturing

Stewart will provide oversight for all areas of battery manufacturing including engineering, maintenance and production. In addition to his role as vice president, Stewart will serve as the plant operations lead.

Stewart joined Toyota in 1997 as a maintenance group leader at Toyota West Virginia and has since held several leadership roles. He most recently served as TMNA's vice president of Production Engineering overseeing the powertrain division across Toyota's North American operations.

Meet April Mason, General Manager of Plant Services

Mason will provide oversight for production control, facilities and local business planning, as well as coordinate with various regional functional teams related to Toyota's battery business.

Mason joined Toyota in 1994 as a team member relations representative at Toyota Kentucky. In 2005, she transitioned to TMNA Human Resources and has held several organizational roles, most recently serving as the general manager of Administration for Toyota Alabama.

Meet Emily Wilemon-Holland, Manager of Corporate Communications

Holland will be responsible for establishing Toyota's presence in the Piedmont Triad region, managing ongoing media, community and local government relations. She will also support Toyota Racing Development (TRD) located in Salisbury, North Carolina. TRD is the company's in-house tuning shop responsible both for improving streetcar performance and supporting Toyota's racing interests around the world.

Holland comes from Toyota Mississippi where she led corporate communications for more than a decade.

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