

Toyota Texas Embraces A Workforce For All

July 23, 2024

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Last month, Toyota Texas celebrated a new milestone in workforce inclusion of individuals with disabilities: the grand opening of the ToyotAbility Production Center (TPC). The TPC is a dedicated workspace within the plant that employs individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in subcomponent work. The first

employee started in April 2024, and the TPC now has six employees. The TPC team has produced more than 240,000 parts to date.

“We are proud the TPC is a beacon within Toyota Texas that embraces and employs individuals with different abilities,” said Susann Kazunas, Toyota Texas president. “The work our employees do in the TPC every day is essential to assembling Tundras and Sequoias, and I am grateful they are a part of Team Texas.”

A Respect For People Mindset

The ToyotAbility Business Partnering Group (BPG) was the driving force behind the TPC. Toyota’s BPGs are volunteer, employee-driven organizations that work to support business objectives as well as strengthen the collection of innovative ideas and voices that represent the future of Toyota. ToyotAbility’s mission is to support individuals and groups across a broad spectrum of visible, invisible, temporary and permanent disabilities within and beyond the walls of Toyota.

When creating the Toyota Texas TPC, the ToyotAbility BPG team benchmarked against similar operations at Toyota’s other North American manufacturing facilities and paid careful attention to detail to ensure the space could accommodate a spectrum of abilities and needs, embodying Toyota’s core value of respect for people. The design of the TPC included special considerations for soundproofing, visual cues, accessibility, proximity to plant resources and more to lower the barriers to successful employment for these employees.

“The goal of the ToyotAbility Production Center is simple: provide meaningful job opportunities and truly embrace our future as Toyota makes the transformation to a mobility company – dedicated to providing mobility for all,” said Rob Franklin, Toyota Texas group manager of body operations and ToyotAbility executive sponsor.

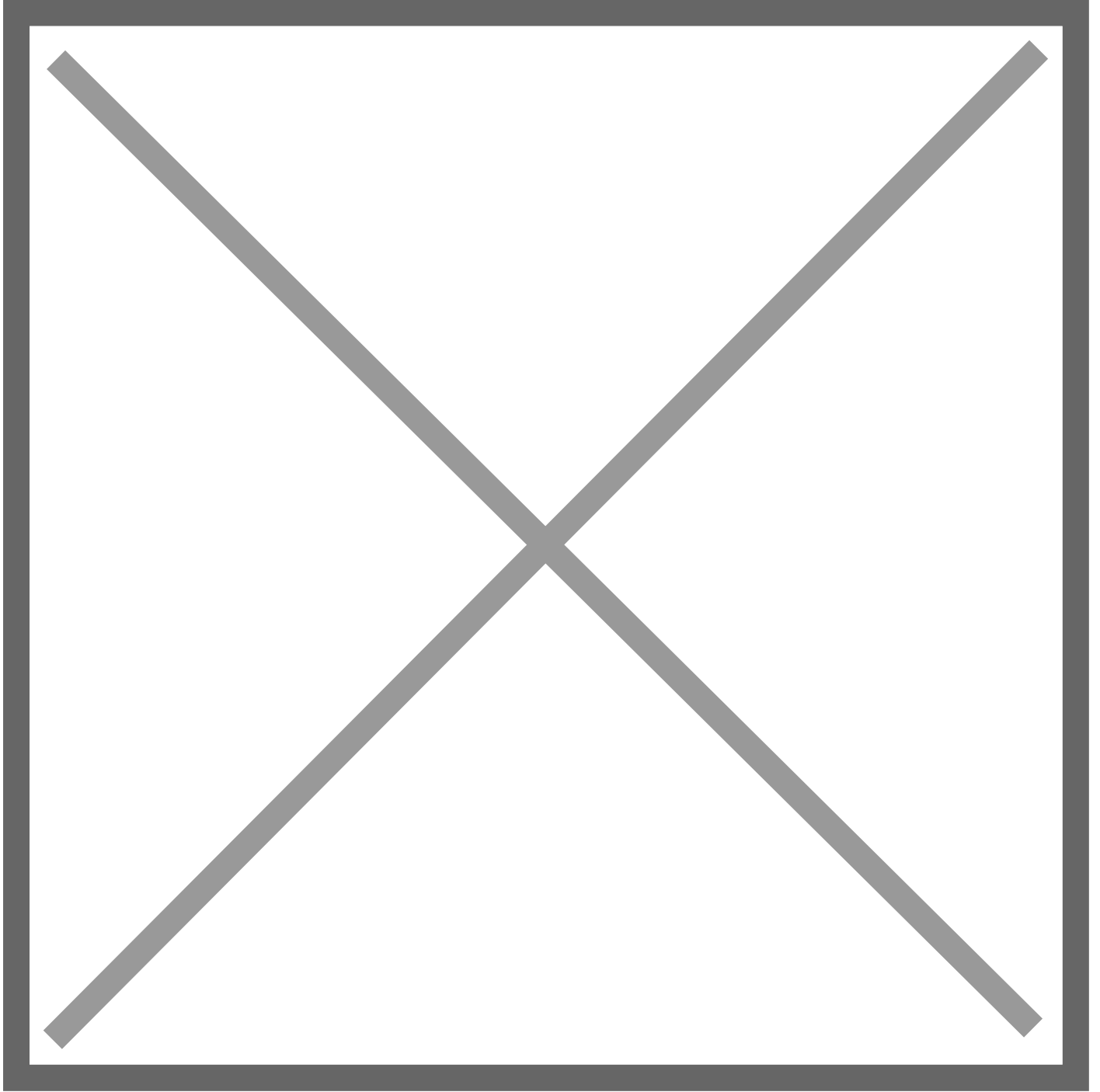


A TPC employee sorts parts for assembly.

Life-Changing Opportunities

Toyota Texas calls San Antonio home and prides itself on providing stable, high-quality jobs to the community. According to the City of San Antonio’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Department, an estimated 232,627 people (15.6%) in San Antonio reported one or more types of disability.¹ It can be a challenge for these individuals to find employment.

“I graduated from Texas A&M University San Antonio in 2021, and it was difficult for me to find a job. Thank you to Toyota for giving me my first job,” said Beaux-Michael P., TPC employee. “All of us here are very grateful to work at Toyota Texas and really appreciate the time and effort everyone has given to help us be successful and part of the Toyota family.”



TPC employee, Beaux-Michael P., shares his story.

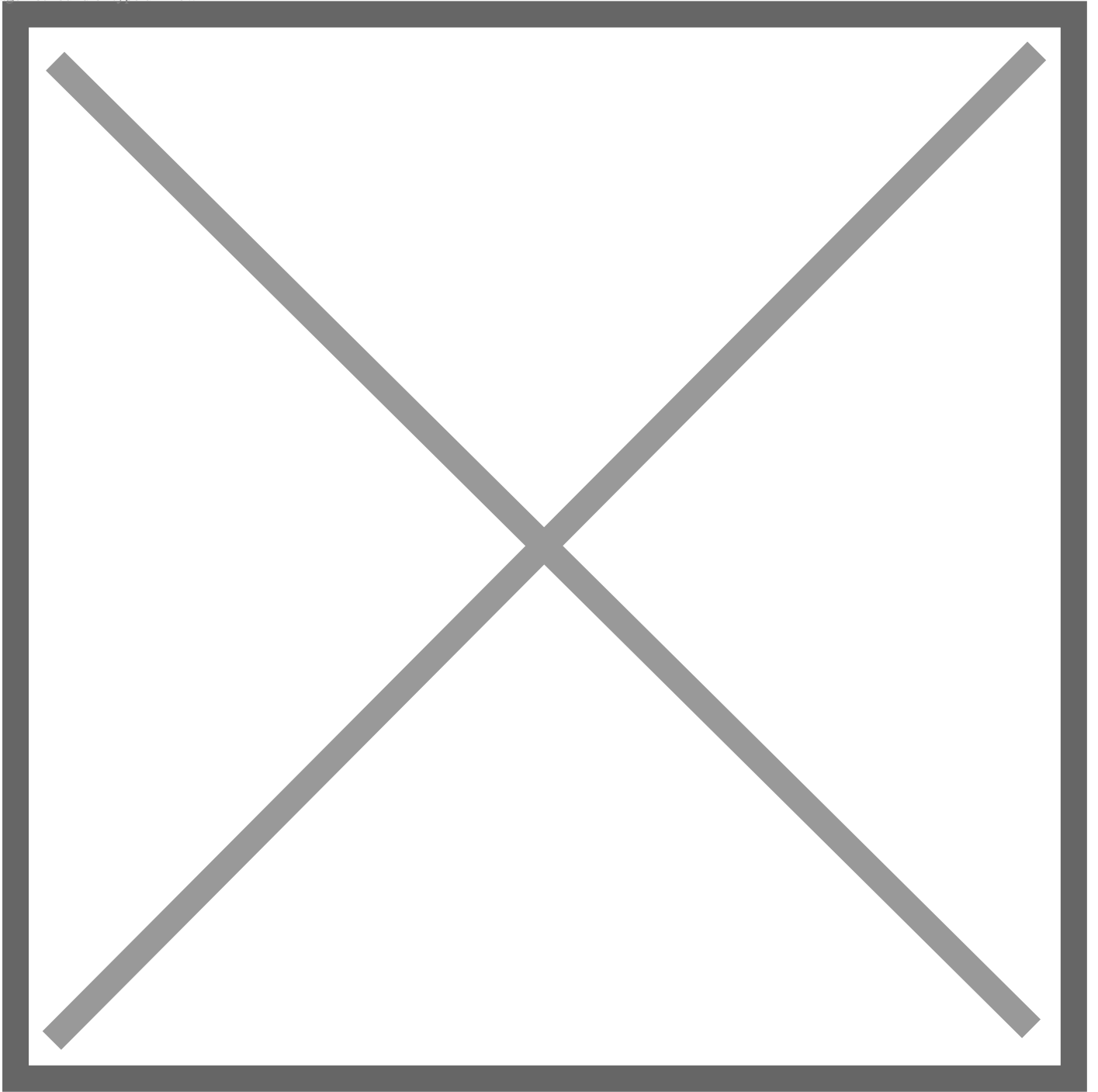
Community-Based Support

A project more than five years in the making, the TPC was created in collaboration with Texas Workforce Solutions, Mission Road Development Center and ResourceMFG Staffing. A June ribbon cutting ceremony gathered these partners along with Toyota Texas employees, local government officials and community leaders to celebrate this achievement for workplace inclusion.

“The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) strives to empower all Texans with the skills and resources they need to prosper,” said TWC Commissioner Representing Employers, Joe Esparza. “Looking to our abilities community for motivated employees is great for business and encourages others to enter the workforce at all levels of opportunity. I commend ToyotAbility Production Center in San Antonio for their [work] with Texas Workforce Solutions to open this facility in the heart of their manufacturing operations.”

For nearly two decades, Toyota Texas has rolled out top-quality trucks and SUVs with more than 181,000 vehicles assembled last year. The plant employs more than 3,700 people in San Antonio.

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Members of the community joined TPC employees and Toyota Texas leaders in the ribbon cutting ceremony.

¹Data from the City of San Antonio Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Department:
<https://www.sanantonio.gov/DAO/About/DisabilityCharacteristics>