

GM to bring pickups production back to Canada

November 5 2020



GM says it will bring back production of pickups at its Oshawa, Ontario assembly plant, which had been closed in December 2019. Hundreds of Silverado pickups assembled at the plant are seen here in November 2018 outside the facility

General Motors announced Thursday a deal with the Canadian auto

workers' union to bring back to this country production of pickups to meet rising demand in North America.

GM said it will hire up to 1,700 workers and spend more than Can\$1 billion (US\$767 million) to retool the Oshawa, Ontario plant, which closed last year, to assemble its "new family of pickup trucks."

Production is expected to begin in January 2022, GM said.

"We will move very quickly," GM chief executive Mary Barra told a conference call. "We expect construction to begin on the new body shop and flexible assembly module at Oshawa immediately upon ratification."

"When the plant comes back online in early 2022, we will see a significant increase in our full-size pickup production capacity."

The tentative agreement must still be ratified by workers, but the union, Unifor, is recommending its union members do so.

GM also said it would spend Can\$109 million to boost engine and transmission production at its St. Catharines, Ontario propulsion plant and its parts distribution warehouse in nearby Woodstock.

The announcement caps a round of negotiations with the big three Detroit-based automakers that secured new investments also from Ford and Fiat Chrysler to boost auto production in Canada.

Ford said it would build battery-electric vehicles in Oakville, Ontario while Fiat Chrysler pledged more than Can\$1 billion to retool its Windsor, Ontario plant to make hybrid and plug-in vehicles.

GM's Oshawa plant used to make the Chevrolet Impala and the Cadillac XTS, as well as Silverado pickup trucks.

Production began in 1953 and at its peak in the 1980s, the plant employed roughly 23,000 people.

Its closure in December 2019 as part of a GM global restructuring had put out of work 2,500 Canadians.

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