

Mercedes opens Alabama battery plant, adding up to 600 jobs

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A logo of the German car manufacturer Mercedes Benz is pictured in Berlin, Germany, Friday, June 25, 2021. Mercedes-Benz has opened a new electric vehicle battery factory near Tuscaloosa, Alabama, that will create up to 600 new jobs. The German automaker said Tuesday, March 15, 2022 that the plant in Bibb County opened a few months before it plans to start making two all-electric SUVs at a large factory in nearby Tuscaloosa. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Sohn, File

Mercedes-Benz has opened a new electric vehicle battery factory near Tuscaloosa, Alabama, that will create up to 600 new jobs.

The German automaker said Tuesday that the plant in Bibb County opened a few months before Mercedes plans to start making two all-electric SUVs at a large assembly plant in nearby Tuscaloosa.

The new plant will supply batteries for the EQS and EQE SUVs, which will be built for sale in the U.S. and for exports, the company said in a statement. Mercedes said it spent about \$1 billion on the battery plant and to upgrade the assembly line in Tuscaloosa to make electric vehicles.

The Alabama battery plant will make lithium-ion batteries with an advanced chemistry that contains nickel, cobalt and manganese, Mercedes said.

It is one of six battery factories that the company plans including two in Germany, one each in China and Thailand and one in Poland. Mercedes plans to build EVs at seven plants on three continents.

Mercedes already employs about 4,500 people at the Tuscaloosa assembly plant, which made about 260,000 SUVs last year. The plant can build internal combustion engine vehicles on the same line as electric vehicles, Mercedes said.

The automaker says it will go fully electric by the end of the decade, depending on market conditions. The company plans to build eight battery cell plants worldwide with partners.

"Mercedes-Benz will expand its partnerships with the world's leading battery technology companies," the statement said.

The company said it is joining with Envision AESC to supply the

Alabama battery factory with modules from a new U.S. plant. Module supplies will start arriving in the middle of the decade, Mercedes said.

The Alabama plant currently is getting battery cells from Mercedes' existing network of suppliers.

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey and other dignitaries attended the opening ceremony Tuesday.

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