

LEAR PLANT EXPERIENCING EMPLOYMENT BOOST



Lear Corp.'s manufacturing plant has met employment projections that were set last year with higher post-recession operating levels. Jaime Luna, the United Auto Workers Local 2335 president, stated that there are more than 500 union workers at the location. Luna also stated that most of the workers are working two shifts to produce the seating units for Ford's Explorer and Taurus models. "Right now, we're basically going full-steam," Luna said about the production activity. "Ford has a pretty active schedule, so we're trying to keep (up)." Mel Stephens, a spokesman with Lear, said that the plant in Hammond, Indiana, is one of the more successful and larger plants in the entire company. "Those products have been very well accepted in the market and (they're) doing well," Stephens said. The Police Interceptor is expected to be produced by Ford in Chicago but Stephens declined to comment as to whether or not the Hammond plant would produce the seating for those vehicles. Lear, deciding not to speculate on employment levels in the future, said Lear would support Ford if the automaker can increase the volume of its production. Contract Services Group, a facility in charge of handling sub-assembly work for Lear, operates in the area and has greater fortunes so long as the activity remains high at Lear. Lear was one of the auto suppliers that had to file for federal funding in order to stay afloat during the country's recession. Lear is hoping that vehicle production in North America ends the year with 12.7 million units, which would result in a 6 percent increase from 2010. As more and more activity took place within the industry, Lear was able to raise its 2011 revenue projection by \$400 million to \$13.4 billion. The Ford Explorer has been one of the hottest selling items on the auto market since it was redesigned for production in 2010 in Chicago. The sales for the Explorer have risen 126.3 percent to 96,957 through only the first three quarters of 2011, and these numbers can be compared to the same time period in 2010. On the other side of things, the sale numbers for the Taurus have declined 11.2 percent from January to September. Through the first two quarters of 2011, Lear has recorded a profit of \$333.5 million, which was up from the \$225.9 million Lear made in the same time frame from 2010. Lear will not announce its financial figures for the third quarter until October 28, 2011. The job boost at Lear has plenty of people in the state talking about a possible turnaround for the job market, where many believe the recession has finally come to an end, at least in Indiana, but nothing should be taken for granted when it comes to having a job.

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