

Mitsubishi to break ground in March on \$80M Mason factory expansion



Mitsubishi Electric Automotive America is considering expanding its already-existing auto supply plant in Mason to meet demand.

By [Chelsey Levingston](#)

Staff Writer

MASON —

A local auto parts supplier plans to break ground next month on a more than \$80 million building expansion as national auto sales climbed for five consecutive years in 2014 to 16.5 million new vehicles sold.

Mitsubishi Electric Automotive America Inc. in Mason will build an additional 156,000 square feet of manufacturing space onto its existing 400,000-square-foot Bethany Road factory, according to the city.

The total investment is expected to exceed \$80 million, including the cost of upgrading property and equipment with construction set to be complete by the end of the year.

Additionally, the proposed project could create approximately 100 new full-time jobs and retain more than 450 existing jobs at the company, according to information provided by Mason's Economic Development Director Michele Blair.

The expansion is prompted by a new contract Mitsubishi secured with General Motors to produce alternators for the 2016 Cruze, according to information provided by Ohio Development Services Agency.

"This investment reinforces Mitsubishi Electric's commitment to help our customers increase production as they keep pace with growing auto sales in North America," said Nobuyuki Nakagaki, president of Mitsubishi Electric Automotive America, in a provided written statement.

"We're also pleased to be adding 100 new jobs in the next few years to help grow the economy in the city of Mason and the region," Nakagaki said.

To entice the automaker to choose Mason for expansion, the Ohio Tax Credit Authority on Monday approved a 55 percent, 8-year Job Creation Tax Credit for Mitsubishi, which the company can only claim if it chooses to expand locally and add new jobs.

The Mason location is the headquarters for Mitsubishi's manufacturing of starters and alternators. This project has the possibility to mark Mitsubishi's eighth physical expansion since it first opened operations in Warren County in 1987, according to city records.

A slew of auto suppliers announced local expansions in 2014 as auto sales rebound. The biggest announcements include plans by Fuyao Glass America Inc. to open an auto glass factory at the former General Motors assembly plant in Moraine. After Fuyao's initial announcement a year ago, the Chinese-based company last month announced it will nearly double the amount of jobs originally promised at the former GM plant and hire 1,550 workers and invest a total of \$360 million.

Also in Warren County, UGN Inc. is building in Monroe a \$50 million, 232,000-square-foot manufacturing facility to produce vehicle carpeting, underfloor modules and other interior automotive parts. More than 150 new jobs will be created. Full production is expected to start midway through 2015.

ThyssenKrupp Bilstein of America Inc. in July last year revealed plans for its third expansion since 2011, and the largest one yet. The \$26 million project includes a building expansion and investment in new, more advanced equipment. Expectations are to create more than 200 new jobs at the Hamilton maker of shock absorbers by 2017.

Joining the list of expanding auto suppliers, Faurecia Emissions Control Technologies in Franklin announced last August plans to add 120 new jobs in Warren County. At the time of the announcement, Faurecia already employed 329 people in Franklin, according to Dayton Development Coalition. Faurecia's Franklin site on Commerce Center Drive, part of the company's Emissions Control Technologies division, produces parts for exhaust systems. Expansion plans were to add new production lines.