

AUTOMOTIVE

Mercedes-Benz brings sustainability and jobs to US

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Mercedes challenges developers to come up with new ideas

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

German automaker Mercedes-Benz is joining the onslaught of automakers who have made significant moves towards sustainability in the past month with its own manufacturing plans.

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The automaker has announced that it will be setting up electric vehicle production in the United States. The news follows the unveiling of another one of its electric Concept models, which is plans to roll out into production by 2020.

"We are excited to celebrate 20 years of production in Tuscaloosa by expanding our operations in the region and by bringing our electric initiative to the United States," said said Markus Schfer, member of the Divisional Board of Mercedes-Benz Cars, Production and Supply Chain. "With this \$1 billion investment, we are significantly growing our manufacturing footprint here in Alabama, while sending a clear message to our customers across the U.S. and around the world: Mercedes-Benz will continue to be on the cutting-edge of electric vehicle development and production.

"With production locations for EVs and batteries in Europe, China and, now, the U.S., our global network is ready for the era of electric vehicles," he said. "Thanks to our plant modernization in Tuscaloosa, we will be able to quickly ramp up U.S. production of EQ models, while also being more flexible to our customers' demands for innovative vehicles that live up to the excellent quality that is synonymous with the Mercedes-Benz brand."

Electricity and job opportunity

Mercedes-Benz's first all-electric concept vehicle relies on digital to innovate in luxury, fuel and even marketing, and was unveiled during this year's Frankfurt Motor Show.

The automaker is hyping up the release of the new Concept EQA, featuring digital at the core of its build and beyond. To introduce the new vehicle, Mercedes released a trailer in addition to a digital film as part of its 60-second video series ([see more](#)).

Following this news, Mercedes announced that it will start producing electric vehicles at its factory in Tuscaloosa,

Alabama. In addition to the EV production, it will be creating a battery plant nearby to help foster innovation in auto electricity.



Mercedes' GLE

While sustainability is a major topic in today's society, the automaker is also hoping to help with another issue that is a polarizing topic in politics today; the job market. Mercedes claims that these initiatives will bring more than 600 new jobs to the U.S.

Mercedes is working with the state of Alabama to regulate these changes and move forward.

A new Global Logistics Center for Mercedes will also be built along with a new after-sales North American hub. The hub will work to export vehicle kits to assembly factories overseas.

The Tuscaloosa plant currently works exclusively on manufacturing SUV models GLE, GLS and GLE Coup but will now expand to include production for more modern SUVs including plug-in hybrids.



Mercedes' GLS

Electricity in automotive

This bullish strategy on electricity in vehicles comes amongst a series of news from the automotive world, heightening sustainability. For instance, China, India and other countries have announced to plans to cease production and sales of gas-powered vehicles in the future.

Tesla is also working to make charging stations more accessible to electric vehicle owners by altering its city networks.

The automaker is expanding its Supercharger network into major cities by introducing a new version that is more fitting to city infrastructure. Chicago and Boston will be the first to usher in the new smaller charging stations ([see more](#)).

"With the addition of electric SUVs to our future fleet, we will provide discerning drivers with a new, high quality automotive option that will marry performance, luxury and environmental stewardship," Mr. Schfer said. "As a result of our investments in Alabama, Mercedes-Benz customers will soon be able to enjoy advanced technology coupled with a luxury driving experience."

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