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September 19, 2012 10:36 AM

## Mahindra picks Troy to set up first North American technical center

By Theresa Clift  
Crain News Service

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DETROIT — India's **Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.** on Tuesday opened a technical center in Troy, the conglomerate's first in North America.

The center will provide design and consulting services for Mahindra's automotive customers in the region as well as support its automotive and tractor engineering operations in India.

Mahindra, India's largest tractor and SUV maker, has sold tractors in the United States since 1994.

Plans to sell a compact diesel pickup in the United States have fallen through, but Mahindra still wants to become a top 10 global automaker by 2020. Mahindra executives today said they plan to target the global entry-level segments.

**Mahindra Engineering Services'** clients include **General Motors Co., Daimler AG, BMW AG, Volvo, Bentley** and **Navistar**, company executives said.

Mahindra chose Troy because Southeast Michigan is a hub for automotive culture and enthusiasts, said Prashant Kamat, Mahindra Engineering Services CEO.

The technical center initially will employ 25 engineers. Staffing could rise to 50.

*From Automotive News*



## Tom Walsh: Detroit still draws the automakers

It's easy but misleading to take a myopic view of the global auto industry by focusing on the struggles of Detroit's hometown companies, I was reminded Tuesday in Troy, where India's Mahindra Group opened its first technical center in North America.

It's a modest beginning for Mahindra in Michigan. The office near Maple and John R roads will accommodate 25 engineers at first, with space available to hire 25 more.

Mahindra has much bigger ambitions, however, such as becoming one of the world's top 10 automobile brands by the end of this decade.

### A need to be here

Today, after a stalled attempt a few years ago to set up a dealer network for small trucks and SUVs in the U.S., Mahindra is not a player in the American auto market, although it does sell farm equipment here. Its global car and truck output of about 500,000 vehicles a year, sold mostly in India, places it outside the top 20 global automakers, according to Forbes magazine's 2012 rankings.

If Mahindra is to be a global top 10 automaker by 2020, it will have to outsell

the likes of Chrysler, Mazda, Mercedes-Benz, Fiat, BMW and Renault to get there.

Farfetched?

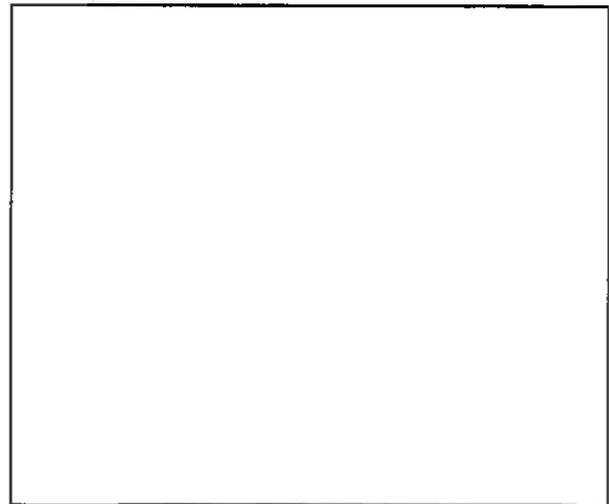
Perhaps, but Rajan Wadhera, Mahindra's chief executive for technology, products and sourcing in the auto and farm equipment sectors, sounded very serious Tuesday when he projected the company's automobile output will reach 1 million units by 2016 and 2 million by 2020.

"This means we have to do many, many new product development plans during the next six to eight years," he said, the upshot being lots of work for the new Troy technical center and Mahindra's engineers in India and elsewhere.

### Auto culture counts

That's a tall order for an automaker from an emerging economy, but there is a recent precedent. In just two years, 2005 to 2007, Korean automaker Hyundai boosted

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global sales by 1.5 million units (from 2.5 to 4 million) and surpassed Fiat, Chrysler, Peugeot, Nissan and Honda.

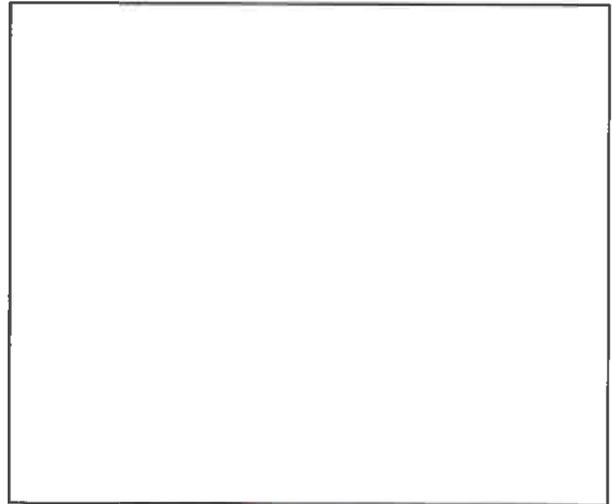
The good news for Detroit and Michigan is that despite the ordeals of General Motors, Ford and Chrysler in recent decades, the Detroit region is still viewed as a place where virtually every aspiring global automaker -- and their suppliers -- must have a presence.

Mahindra looked at Illinois, the Netherlands and other locations when scouting a spot for a technical center in the West. "And we found that Troy was the best location for engineers, for access to design and testing," said Wadhera. "Mahindra is keen to be a part of this ecosystem and culture."

Every month when U.S. car and truck sales are reported, there is much navel-gazing, boasting or hand-wringing in Detroit about whether the hometown car companies are gaining or losing market share. And that's understandable, to a point.

But what's really critical is that we continue to build on this asset -- this "ecosystem and culture," as Wadhera called it, encompassing everything from the region's tool-and-die talent to the fun of the Woodward Dream Cruise and Belle Isle Grand Prix. That way, no matter who's gaining or losing sales, all the players will feel compelled to be here, hire here and invest here.

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# Mahindra & Mahindra opens first technical centre in US

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Mahindra & Mahindra today said it has opened its first technical centre in the US to provide design and consulting services to automotive customers, mainly in Michigan region.

**Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd.**

NEW DELHI: Diversified conglomerate Mahindra & Mahindra today said it has opened its first **technical centre** in the US to provide design and consulting services to automotive customers, mainly in Michigan region.

"Mahindra inaugurated its new Technical Center in Troy, Michigan today. This facility is the company's first technical center in **USA** and will leverage Michigan's large automotive talent pool to provide design and consulting services for Mahindra's **automotive customers** in the region," the company said in a statement on its website.

This new facility will initially employ 25 engineers and has been designed to accommodate double that number in the future, it added.

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6.25(0.79%)

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Commenting on the development, [Mahindra Group](#) Chief Executive (Technology, Product Development and Sourcing -- Automotive & Farm Equipment Sectors) Rajan Wadhera said: "This new Technology Center will serve as a base for Mahindra to address the engineering demand for our automotive and farm engineering requirements together with our Global

Development Center in India."

The Troy center is the latest addition to M&M's 'neural network' of innovation, which also comprises its other research facilities in India, the US, China and Korea, he added.

Mahindra Engineering Chief Executive Officer [Prashant Kamat](#) said: "This is our first Technical Center in USA... We also plan to scale up the center in due course and will establish a dedicated recruiting department in the US office to meet this goal."

The company currently has a workforce of about 100 in North America with over 60 per cent comprising US nationals, he added.

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