

BMW Expects Production Increase Despite Economy

FRANKFURT (AP) — German carmaker BMW AG said it wants second half 2009 production levels to match levels of the second half of 2008, despite the dramatic sales declines experienced in the first half of this year.

The Munich-based carmaker told German weekly *Automobilwoche* the company "wouldn't build fewer cars in the second half of 2009, compared to the year-ago period." At least 620,612 vehicles would be produced, Frank-Peter Arndt, a BMW production executive told the magazine.

BMW ended shorter workers' hours programs in September and has hired between 200 and 300 part-time workers at both its Leipzig and Munich works.

Arndt also said at its Spartanburg, South Carolina production facility BMW would add shifts, without being more specific.

He told the magazine demand for the company's X5 and X6 SUV models was higher than the company's output at the moment. He said especially in China, demand for the models was "extremely good."

Shares of BMW were about 1 percent higher at euro34.11 (\$50.14) in Frankfurt morning trading.

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