Biden To Announce Plans For Ex-GM Delaware Plant

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WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Joe Biden is expected to announce Tuesday that a California luxury automaker will build plug-in hybrid electric vehicles at a former General Motors plant in Delaware.

The White House said Sunday that Biden, a former senator from Delaware, will make a major announcement about the future of the former GM plant in Wilmington, Delaware, along with Delaware Gov. Jack Markell and state officials.

Fisker Automotive of Irvine, California, plans to revamp GM's Boxwood Road facility to build plug-ins, officials said Friday. The officials declined to be identified before the formal announcement.

The GM plant closed last summer and had produced the Saturn Sky and Pontiac Solstice roadsters, as well as an Opel version that was exported to Europe.

Fisker CEO Henrik Fisker said last week that the automaker would soon announce the location of its refurbished U.S. plant.

The auto manufacturer recently received approval for a $528.7 million government loan to develop plug-ins and is expected to release its first vehicle, the Karma, in the summer of 2010.

The Karma, which will be built in Finland by Valmet Automotive, will start at $87,900 and has pre-sold about 1,500 vehicles.

Most of the government loan will be used to develop a next-generation plug-in, under a program called Project Nina. The vehicle will sell for nearly $48,000 before a federal tax credit of $7,500 for plug-in hybrids and is expected to be built at the Delaware facility with an annual production of about 100,000 vehicles.

Project Nina is expected to reach showrooms by 2012 and Fisker has said a lower-cost, high-volume plug-in could follow.

A Fisker spokesman did not immediately comment Sunday.

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