

Saab Taps Subaru Exec To Run North American Operations

ROYAL OAK, Mich. (AP) — Saab named an executive from Subaru on Monday to run its North American operations.

The struggling Swedish automaker said Timothy Colbeck would be the president and chief operating officer overseeing its largest market.

Colbeck has 25 years of U.S. auto industry experience with Subaru in sales, e-business, finance and other areas, Saab said. Most recently he was senior vice president of sales, and under his direction, Subaru had record sales and market share in the past two years, the statement said.

He will report directly to Matthias Seidl, Saab Automobile AB vice president and head of global sales and aftersales, and the Saab North America board of directors.

Saab has struggled since Dutch automaker Spyker Cars NV bought it out of liquidation from General Motors in January 2010. Last week Hawtai Motor Group, a small, privately owned Chinese automaker, saved Saab from imminent collapse through an agreement to provide \$223 million (euro150 million) for the ailing brand.

Spyker has said it expects the carmaker to become profitable in 2012 and aims to ramp up production to about 100,000 cars a year.

So far, however, it has failed to meet targets. In 2010 it sold just under 32,000 Saabs, below its initial goal of 45,000. The company sold 9,400 cars in the first quarter.

In the U.S., Saab sold only 696 vehicles in April and 2,730 for the first four months of this year, according to Autodata Corp.

Saab Cars North America, located in the Detroit suburb of Royal Oak, said it will roll out four new products this year including a sedan and crossover vehicle.

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