Honda To Invest $98M At OH Engine Plant

ANNA, Ohio (AP) — Honda said Wednesday it will invest $98 million at its largest auto engine plant for the western Ohio facility to produce components for its new transmission technology.

The engine plant in Anna will make high-tech pulley components for Honda's new continuously variable transmission, or CVT, aimed at improving fuel efficiency. Honda announced $120 million in investments last year for the production of the CVT at the plant in nearby Russells Point.

Honda said the two combined investments for building next-generation powertrain technologies will create 150 new jobs.

"The production of this new CVT technology puts the Buckeye State right in the middle of Honda's global strategy," Hide Iwata, president and CEO of Honda of America Manufacturing Inc., said in a statement.

The Russells Point plant is expected to start making the CVT this summer, with pulley components from Japanese operations. The Anna plant will begin manufacturing those parts next year.

The CVT technology is part of Honda's "Earth Dreams" powertrain technology, which will launch in the U.S. in 2013 Accord models coming out later this year, the company said.

"Our associates have incredible experience and we are counting on them to help us introduce an even higher level of powertrain technology for our customers," Anna plant Manager John Spoltman said in a statement.

The Anna plant employs 2,400 people and annually makes more than 1.1 million engines for two auto productions plants in Marysville and East Liberty, Ohio, and operations in Indiana and Canada.

The Russells Point plant, which has 1,050 workers, makes automatic transmissions and four-wheel-drive assemblies for cars and light trucks. Its third assembly line is under construction as part of the previously announced investments, which include an expansion for aluminum casting operations to support the production of the new transmission.

Overall, Honda has about 13,500 Ohio employees in manufacturing, support, research and development and other operations. It has announced more than $500 million in investments at four Ohio plants since late 2010, the company said.

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