

# VW Conducting National Search To Fill TN Jobs

Erik Schelzig, Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Volkswagen is conducting a national search to fill the most specialized of 1,000 new jobs at its Chattanooga plant.

The German automaker said Monday that it is using a national print and online advertising campaign to fill specialty positions, including maintenance technicians, manufacturing engineers and logistics supervisors.

Officials stress that VW seeks to hire locally as much as possible, but the more than 100 new jobs requiring specialized experience call for casting a wider net.

"We're looking in Michigan and we're looking in the South," Hans-Herbert Jagla, vice president for human resources for Volkswagen Chattanooga, said in a phone interview. "We're quite attractive at VW, and we hope we can get really good people to help."

The ads seek to make the Chattanooga location a selling point.

"Thanks to the fact that our plant is located in one of America's most up-and-coming towns, our employees aren't just building great cars, they're building great lives as well," according to one of the print ads that are scheduled to run through July.

Volkswagen AG, the world's second-largest car company, began building Passat sedans at the \$1 billion plant a year ago. The company is adding a third team to boost weekly plant operations to 120 hours, up 40 hours from current levels.

Volkswagen sold just under 23,000 Passats in the U.S. last year, an 83 percent increase over 2010. This year's sales already have surpassed last year's. Through March, VW has sold 24,539 Passats, according to Autodata Corp.

Jonathan Browning, the president and CEO of Volkswagen Group of America, said at the announcement of the new shift team last month that the extra workforce will help the plant ramp up and be able to produce 170,000 vehicles next year.

Most of the 800 new jobs announced last month are production positions that can be filled locally, said VW spokesman Scott Wilson. The 200 new jobs announced in January have already been filled largely from the Chattanooga area, he said.

The additional workers will bring total employment at the plant to more than 3,500 by the end of the year, according to the company.

State Rep. Gerald McCormick, R-Chattanooga, said local and state officials have been making a strong effort to improve technical education programs for students interested in pursuing jobs in the automotive sector. But he said it's not an instant

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process — especially when it comes to specialized positions.

"We're not where we need to be as far as having the employees ready to step into those jobs, but we're making real programs," McCormick said. "And this just points out the need to make even more progress."

Gov. Bill Haslam said his discussions with Volkswagen officials have included the technical education issue.

The Republican governor said VW executive have told him, "We love being in Tennessee, everything has been better than what expected, except we really need you to produce more qualified engineering (graduates), but other technical degrees as well."

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