

GM To Hire Up To 500 For TX Computer Center

Tom Krisher, AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — General Motors is opening a new computer center in Austin, Texas, where it plans to hire up to 500 people.

The automaker said Friday that it will hire software developers, project managers, database experts and business analysts to run the first of several information technology innovation centers it plans to open in the U.S.

GM said it picked Austin because it has a ready workforce with the skills that it's looking for. The Austin metropolitan area is home to a growing high-tech community that includes the University of Texas at Austin and computer maker Dell Inc.

The Austin center is the first of several that the company plans to open in the U.S.

General Motors Co. already has operations in Austin and has begun hiring, spokeswoman Julie Huston-Rough said. She could not say how many centers GM will open or if there will be layoffs elsewhere. Other sites have not yet been picked, she said.

The automaker planned to release more information on its plans during a conference call scheduled for Friday morning.

GM says its information technology innovation centers will help to get breakthrough ideas into the company's cars and trucks. It's also intended to improve GM's business processes and drive down costs.

"The next generation of IT workers, the talented visionaries we want contributing at the Innovation Center, are being trained at top computer science schools in Texas and surrounding states," GM Chief Information Officer Randy Mott said in a statement.

Huston-Rough says the new technology centers are separate from a GM plan now under way to consolidate its 23 global data centers into two in an effort to cut costs and increase speed and efficiency.

GM shares rose 6 cents to \$22.51 in premarket trading.

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