

The logo for the Delaware Economic Development Office features the word "Delaware" in a large, elegant, black cursive script. Below it, the words "ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE" are written in a smaller, black, all-caps sans-serif font, spaced out evenly.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

NEWS RELEASE

Markell Welcomes Automaker to Boxwood Plant

Fisker Automotive will build affordable plug-in hybrid vehicles

WILMINGTON, Del. (Oct. 27, 2009) – WILMINGTON -- Gov. Jack Markell joined Vice President Joe Biden, and the state’s federal delegation Tuesday to announce that Fisker Automotive has agreed to acquire the Boxwood auto assembly plant. The Boxwood Road facility will support Fisker Automotive’s Project NINA, the development and build of an affordable, family-oriented plug-in hybrid sedan.

The announcement caps months of work for the Markell Administration, which marshaled several state agencies to work with the federal government to find a replacement for General Motors, which closed the plant earlier this year. Below are the remarks Markell delivered at the announcement ceremony, which was also attended by Fisker Automotive executives CEO Henrik Fisker and COO Bernard Koehler, as well as representatives of the local United Auto Workers union.

“Thank you, Dr. Montgomery. Last June when we asked you to come to Delaware to learn more about how the closure of Delaware’s GM and Chrysler plants affected our workers and our communities, you responded immediately, including with a National Emergency Grant to serve our auto workers. We are grateful to you, the Vice President and the entire Obama Biden administration for your commitment to Delaware’s workers.

“Before Dr. Montgomery came to Delaware, and only one day after General Motors announced that the Boxwood plant would close, I came to this very place with a heavy heart to explain that we had done everything we could to make sure this plant would stay open – fought every fight, made every argument - but that General Motors had decided to consolidate plants in the Midwest and put an early end to Boxwood’s proud GM legacy.

“I entered the plant that day at an all time low. Two hours later, I left inspired because I found hundreds of people who were not done fighting and certainly not done working.

“People who had built a reputation for some of the best relationships between management and labor in the U.S. automobile industry and some of the highest productivity levels in the nation.

“People who said, quite clearly, they were ready to get to work writing a new chapter in this plant’s, and our state’s, history.

“Today, that new chapter begins. It may well be the story of our state’s economic future. The story of an economy that will expand on our legacy of innovation in fields like pharmaceuticals, corporate finance and chemicals into new fields like the environment and energy.

“A future that supports new technologies and creates quality careers – not just temporary jobs - for Delaware workers.

“I can think of no better partner in this effort than Fisker Automotive. Henrik Fisker and Barny Koehler have an impressive track record of success in the automobile industry, and they, along with their terrific partners at places like Kleiner Perkins also have the vision to see that the future of the American automobile demands new thinking.

“We are thrilled to be part of their plans to put tens of thousands of some of the best built and most fuel efficient cars in America on our nation’s – and the world’s -- roads.

“That we are here to welcome Fisker today is a testament to what works best in Delaware and what will get more Delawareans back to work in many industries. With our close-knit business, government, and educational communities and our potential to respond rapidly to new opportunities, we are truly a state of neighbors. We can move more quickly, act more decisively and work more collaboratively to create and retain critical jobs.

That collaboration was evident in every step of the effort to bring Fisker to Delaware.

“Led by Dave Myers, Joe Riccio and Bob Dolan, it meant the men and women of the Delaware labor movement working side by side with the management of some of our state’s largest companies to showcase Delaware’s talent and our workforce’s potential. When Fisker invests millions of dollars to renovate this facility, they know there are great companies and great workers here to rely on for the work and to be suppliers in the future.

“It meant people like the CEO of DuPont Ellen Kullman reacting to my telling her that Fisker might come to Delaware by immediately seeing an opportunity to partner Fisker with DuPont’s advanced technology labs just a few miles away, where the company creates new engineering polymers and coatings.

“It meant a federal delegation led by Senator Tom Carper whose commitment to this plant is legendary, aided by Senator Kaufman and Congressman Castle. They never took no for an answer and brought our story to Washington every single day.

“It meant a hard-working team from the federal Department of Energy, led by Secretary Chu. Their commitment to seeing this visionary company build cars in this country, regardless of which state, enabled Fisker to access funds that will make the Fisker vision a reality.

“It meant state leaders dedicated to making Delaware the best state in the nation for starting and growing businesses, leaders who are more focused on purpose than protocol, like DNREC Secretary Collin O’Mara who personally ensured that Fisker had answers in the afternoon to questions they asked that morning.

“Or DEDO director Alan Levin – the engine of this effort who, along with Larry Windley of Senator Carper’s staff, moved mountains for this deal - making sure that when Fisker wanted to see our state’s port, they were on the ground at the Port of Wilmington within hours to see where Fisker’s next generation vehicle, created here at Boxwood, could be shipped out to the world.

“It meant county and local government leaders like Chris Coons, who said “we are going to make this happen” and did.

“And, as always, it meant Joe Biden who will never forget where he came from and who is an effective advocate for every governor in this country. The Vice President has already earned the respect of Governors from both sides of the aisle and I couldn’t be more proud that he is from Delaware.

“But while today’s announcement brings hope and promise, it also must bring the reality and caution that this is only the beginning of a long journey toward returning this plant to prominence. There is much work to do, with this State, its leaders and its citizens alike, coming together to make the promise of Fisker Automotive a reality in this very competitive industry.

“These jobs will not be created overnight, nor will we keep them if the Delaware work force is not ready to deliver when manufacturing begins. We must also make sure that our workforce moves promptly and efficiently with retooling this facility, so that production can begin as soon as possible and can finish within budget. And, we must all send out the message to the world that Delaware will soon be producing some of the most fuel efficient, stylish performance cars the world has ever seen.

“Henrik Fisker and Barny Koehler are the two visionaries behind that message. They have built successful careers creating cars and their vision has captured the attention of investors and likely customers around the world. Henrik and Barny, on behalf of everyone who has worked in or for this plant, on behalf of everybody in this state, let me say – Welcome to Delaware!”

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