

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****BILL FORD: ROUGE 100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
REMARKS****As prepared for delivery**

Following are remarks given by Bill Ford, Ford executive chairman, at the Rouge 100th Anniversary Celebration on September 27, 2018

Welcome, everybody, to Dearborn – the home of Ford Motor Company.

And welcome to the Rouge – the heart of Ford Motor Company.

This year, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Rouge and everybody who has been a part of its history.

To us, the Rouge is more than a factory. It's a source of pride and opportunity for generations of workers who've built the best cars and trucks in the world. It's a place where we've always been creating tomorrow together.

Just think about what the Rouge has made possible.

This is where the industrial revolution took hold. My great-grandfather's vision for the Rouge was a fully-integrated, self-sufficient manufacturing powerhouse. By the 1930s, more than 100,000 workers punched in every day. That made the Rouge one of the biggest cities in Michigan.

And like any city, it had its own fire department, police force, and hospital. It had its own power plant, steel mill, glass factory, hundreds of miles of rail and assembly line. Henry Ford owned forests and sawmills; iron mines and limestone quarries; even a rubber plantation. His shipping fleet and railroad brought raw materials in; the best workers in America turned out finished products.. Right here, in one place, Ford employees cast iron, pressed steel, shaped glass, stamped parts, molded tires, and generated power. It was a marvel of the age.

This is where an arsenal of democracy was forged. In World War I, a young Assistant Secretary of the Navy named Franklin Roosevelt asked for help – and Rouge workers built Eagle Boats. In World War II, FDR called again – and Rouge workers supplied the Allies with tank parts, jet engines and amphibious crafts – more than one million vehicles that helped turn the tide of war.

This is also where a middle class was born; where generations of workers built their own piece of the American Dream. Henry Ford was the first to pay his workers a living wage. He was one of the first to introduce the kind of profit-sharing we continue today. He practiced equal opportunity in hiring, employing thousands of Americans with disabilities, and opening the Rouge's doors to thousands of African-Americans looking for opportunity in the Great Migration. Willie Fulton was one of them. We call him the Iron Man for a reason: he's been working at Ford for 65 years. That's incredible.

If these walls could talk, they'd tell the story of America, all our ups and downs, all our triumphs and tragedies. And we've had our share of both.

I remember when my dad first told me about the Battle of the Overpass – when Walter Reuther and his men were beaten for trying to organize our workers. It was a dark moment in our history. While Henry Ford may have thought he was providing more for his workers than a union could, he was wrong. The UAW doesn't just make our workers better, it makes Ford better. We couldn't have come this far without our UAW partners.

When only the Mustang kept this plant going, and even that was in doubt, the UAW helped keep it going.

When the explosion at the power house took the lives of six members of our Ford family and injured many more, we got through those months of loss and recovery together.

And when several executives told me that this was nothing more than an old, polluted tract of land; that we should get rid of the Rouge and go build somewhere else, I said "hell no!" and we proved them wrong – we rolled up our sleeves and built it better than ever.

I remember when our environmental architect Bill McDonough and I first met. The plan was to build a small parts building . But I pointed out my window to the Rouge and said, "if we really want to make a difference, let's make that the greenest plant in the world."

So we hired local workers to retrofit our facilities and make the Rouge a better place to work. We planted what was the biggest living roof in the world at the time. We recycle enough aluminum to build another 400,000 F-Series truck bodies each year.

It's a plant that's as environmentally progressive as heavy manufacturing can be.

And the plant that defined the future of manufacturing once is defining it all over again.

We're adopting new technologies – 3D printing, augmented reality, robotics, exoskeletons.

We're adopting newer and more nimble processes. Kevin Blaser, one of our stamping product and design managers, uses his F-150 to go hunting with his buddies. But he couldn't find a flat spot in the flatbed for his coffee. In just eight weeks, he had a new prototype ready for production. That's a turnaround we couldn't do a decade ago.

What was once dismissed as a Rust Belt relic has become a role model for plants around the world. The Rouge is imitated all over again. And you made it possible.

You made it all possible.

Forty years ago, skeptics thought we couldn't compete with imports. Twenty years ago, cynics thought we might not build things in America anymore. Ten years ago, pretty much everybody questioned whether this industry would survive at all.

You proved them wrong.

Today, the best-selling truck in America rolls off these lines every 53 seconds. Today, Ford employs more hourly workers in America than any automaker. Today, this is the ultimate Made-in-America facility, where the best workers in the world build the toughest, most capable, most popular truck in the world. One hundred percent of the trucks we sell in America are made in America.

We're very proud of that. And that won't change, even as our industry does.

Our business is changing in dramatic ways – everything from how we build our cars, to what they run on, to the way we buy them, hail them, or even drive them at all.

But there's no company better-positioned than Ford to lead that kind of change. We have more than 100 years of experience in the mass production of cars and trucks. We invented it. At the Rouge, you perfected it. And we're going to take it even further.

That's why I am excited to confirm that the revolutionary 2020 Ford F-150 Hybrid will be built right here. It's going to be a truck that takes you farther without sacrificing power and a truck that helps you do more when you get there, with electricity for everything from your tools to your camping gear.

And then we'll keep innovating. When it comes to building the best trucks in the world, we never rest. Whether they're gas, diesel, hybrid – or when the time comes, fully electric – we will ensure they power the world in a sustainable way and remain Built Ford Tough.

Whatever future our employees dream up and design, one thing will remain a constant: we'll build it at the Rouge.

The Rouge was our most important plant 100 years ago. It's our most important plant today. It will be our most important plant tomorrow.

That proud past; that powerful future – it's because of all the men and women who call the Rouge home. I'm so proud to work with all of you.

What an incredible one hundred years. Here's to the next one hundred years of creating tomorrow together.

Thank you very much.

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