



Ford Executive Chair Bill Ford Delivers Remarks on the Future of American Manufacturing

Remarks as prepared for delivery by Ford Executive Chair Bill Ford

DEARBORN, Mich., Oct. 16, 2023 – Thanks for joining me today at the Rouge. I wanted to meet here today because at 105 years old, the Rouge tells the story of Ford, the UAW, and America itself like rings on a tree.

It is a living history of how we have endured every crisis the world has thrown at us and come out stronger together. This is where we built so many of our iconic models through the years and, when called upon by our country, helped democracy prevail in two World Wars by building boats, tank parts, and jet engines. When an explosion here took the lives of several of our employees, we got through those hard months as a family. When the pandemic upended our lives, factories like this one allowed us to turn on a dime to make lifesaving PPE for frontline workers.

A couple decades ago, some executives wanted to shut down the Rouge. They thought it was just a rusting relic of another era. I said no. Instead, we turned it into the most environmentally advanced plant in the industry. Today it assembles America's favorite vehicle, the F-150, and the F-150 Lightning. The Rouge is the crown jewel of a company that still believes building in America matters.

Automobile plants like the Rouge have created countless well-paying manufacturing jobs and a thriving middle class. They have become the foundation of our communities and the Midwest cities that we know and love.

I want to be clear on something else, too. A strong manufacturing base is critical to our national security. Building things in America matters now more than ever, especially in these uncertain times. We cannot take that for granted.

In my lifetime, I have watched countries lose their auto industry, and then virtually all industries after that. Countries that once had vibrant industrial bases no longer make anything. They have become dependent on others for critical products, aspects of their supply chain, and even national defense.

Today, as the UAW strike against Ford continues, we are at a crossroads. Choosing the right path is not just about Ford's future and our ability to compete. This is about the future of the American automobile industry.

The UAW's leaders have called us the enemy in these negotiations. But I will never consider our employees as enemies. This should not be Ford versus the UAW. It should be Ford and the UAW vs. Toyota and Honda, Tesla, and all the Chinese companies that want to enter our home

market. Toyota, Honda, Tesla and others are loving this strike because they know the longer it goes on, the better it is for them. They will win and all of us will lose.

This is why Ford's ability to invest in the future is not just a talking point. It's the absolute lifeblood of our company. And if we lose it, we will lose to the competition. America loses. Many jobs will be lost. So will future investments. We will lose factories like the one we are in today and communities will suffer greatly.

I have not spoken publicly since these negotiations began but I believe I have a unique perspective to share. I am the longest serving leader in our industry. I have been part of every negotiation since 1982 and have worked with every UAW leader from Doug Fraser to Ron Gettelfinger and Bob King.

I have also been the most pro-union leader in our industry. On my watch, Ford is the only automaker to have added UAW jobs over the past 15 years. We employ more UAW workers than any other automaker. We assemble more vehicles here in the U.S. than anybody else, including 100% of our F-Series trucks. Many of our competitors moved jobs to Mexico as we added jobs here in the U.S.

Ford is the strongest partner the UAW has ever known. These are choices we made, and it has added costs to our business in an industry that is extraordinarily competitive. But it aligns with my personal values, the values of our company and our history. We believe in building in America.

Every set of negotiations has been challenging. But at the end of the day, we always recognized that we are all Ford, and we will succeed or fail together. We know how vital the UAW is to the success of our company, and we want our employees to do well. We did not wait for the current contract talks to create thousands of jobs, or to invest billions of dollars beyond what was required by the letter of a deal.

We agree that our UAW colleagues deserve even more. That's why we have offered a record contract which would make our UAW employees among the best-paid manufacturing workers in the world.

Despite this, the UAW's leaders decided to escalate and strike our Kentucky Truck Plant last week. Shutting down that plant harms tens of thousands of Americans right away – workers, suppliers, and dealers alike. It hurts the communities that depend on these local economies. If it continues, it will have a major impact on the American economy and devastate local communities. The supply base is very fragile and will start collapsing with an expanded strike.

But it doesn't have to go that way. We can stop this now.

I call on my great UAW colleagues – some of whom I've known for decades. Many are close personal friends. We need to come together to bring an end to this acrimonious round of talks.

I still believe in a bright future – one that we can build together. I still believe the automobile industry is a major force for good in our country. We will continue to be there when America needs us most.

Ford has strong leaders, the best product lineup we've ever had and a talented workforce. This is an incredible chapter in Ford's history. If we seize this moment, it will mean jobs, profit sharing and security – and growth and prosperity for all of us. But the price of failure should be clear to everyone as well.

Let me close with this. After 120 years, Ford is still a family company. Unlike the pundits and politicians who have been weighing in on this conversation, this is deeply personal to me. When the TV cameras turn off, I will still be here.

I am only the fourth member of my family to lead this company. I always take the long view. I am working for a bright future not just for my children and grandchildren, but for the hundreds of thousands of families that depend on the Ford Motor Company. Those families are counting on us.

Let's come together and reach an agreement, so that we can take the fight to the real competition – and let's build a great company for years to come.

Thank you all very much.

About Ford Motor Company

Ford Motor Company (NYSE: F) is a global company based in Dearborn, Michigan, committed to helping build a better world, where every person is free to move and pursue their dreams. The company's Ford+ plan for growth and value creation combines existing strengths, new capabilities and always-on relationships with customers to enrich experiences for customers and deepen their loyalty. Ford develops and delivers innovative, must-have Ford trucks, sport utility vehicles, commercial vans and cars and Lincoln luxury vehicles, along with connected services. The company does that through three customer-centered business segments: Ford Blue, engineering iconic gas-powered and hybrid vehicles; Ford Model e, inventing breakthrough EVs along with embedded software that defines exceptional digital experiences for all customers; and Ford Pro, helping commercial customers transform and expand their businesses with vehicles and services tailored to their needs. Additionally, Ford is pursuing mobility solutions through Ford Next, and provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. Ford employs about 177,000 people worldwide. More information about the company and its products and services is available at corporate.ford.com.

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