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Inspection robots assure fit, finish

Jun 5, 2011 | Comments

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Ford is installing laser inspection robots to assure more accurate fit and finish and reduce wind noise.

The first inspection robots, part of a \$100-million investment, have been deployed at assembly plants in Wayne, Chicago and Saarlouis, Germany.

The robots use laser technology to measure gaps between body panels to verify they are consistent to one tenth of a millimeter, said Ron Ketelhut, head of Ford's body construction engineering.

Ford worked with Gonzalez Production Systems to develop the laser and camera technology in the robots.

Coming up: Ford's top six executives, led by CEO Alan Mulally, will meet Tuesday afternoon in New York with large institutional investors to discuss the automaker's outlook for the second half of 2011.

Romney bailout stance rebuked

Sergio Marchionne, CEO of Chrysler and Fiat, told CNN Friday that Republican presidential contender Mitt Romney must have been "smoking illegal material" when he argued in 2008 that the U.S. auto industry could be resurrected without federal financial assistance.

In a 2008 New York Times op-ed column, Romney urged the federal government not to provide an industry bailout, but instead force automakers into a "managed bankruptcy."

To which Marchionne said, "Whoever told you that is smoking illegal material. That market had become absolutely dysfunctional in 2008 and 2009. There were attempts made by a variety of people to find strategic alliances with other carmakers on a global scale and the government stepped in, as the actor of last resort. It

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had to do it because the consequences would have been just too large to deal with."

Coming up: Marchionne also said he expects to decide by the end of the year how to fully merge Chrysler and Fiat.

Volt gets 5-star safety rating

The Chevrolet Volt electric car has won a five-star safety rating from the U.S. government.

The five-star rating is the top one given by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

General Motors says the Volt was judged under tougher standards for 2011 models that include a simulated 20 m.p.h. side crash into a pole.

Coming up: GM is expected to announce 25 jobs for a new data center in Warren on Monday.

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New Pistons Owner Tom Gores

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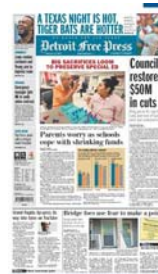
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