

FREEP: Ford adding 250 workers at Dearborn Truck plant

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Ford has assigned an additional 250 workers to its Dearborn Truck Plant so it can meet rising sales demand for its F-150 pickups.

Sales of the F-Series have increased 30.6% through September, and Ford's share of the pickup segment has increased by 4.2 percentage points this year, according to Autodata.

Most of the workers came from Ford's AutoAlliance International plant in Flat Rock, where Ford cut its production of the Mustang and Mazda 6 from two shifts to one shift in July.

"It's really good news for us," said Bernie Ricke, president of UAW Local 600 in Dearborn.

The move brings the total number of hourly workers at Dearborn Truck to about 3,100, Ricke said.

Ford was able to add the 250 new workers at Dearborn Truck this month because it switched to a production schedule that includes "tag relief" workers.

Tag relief workers fill in for other workers when they go on break. By using a tag relief system with staggered break times, Ford can produce more trucks because the

assembly line never stops.

Ford also builds the F-150 at a plant near Kansas City, Mo., and both plants are running at full speed.

Doug Scott, Ford's truck marketing manager, said this month that Ford expects F-150 sales volume will continue to increase as the industry rebounds and as 2011 F-150 pickups reach dealerships. While the style of the truck is the same as last model year's, Ford is introducing four engines that offer better fuel efficiency and horsepower than the competition.

Nationwide, Ford has fewer than 200 workers that are on layoff.