

**REUTERS: UAW chief to meet Fiat CEO and Italian suppliers**

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DETROIT (Reuters) - Senior officials from the United Auto Workers union will travel to Italy next week for a meeting with Fiat SpA (FIA.MI) Chief Executive Sergio Marchionne and a pitch to bring jobs to the United States for its suppliers.

UAW President Bob King will tour Fiat plants for a look at the manufacturing system the Italian automaker has begun to introduce at plants operated by its U.S. affiliate Chrysler, King told Reuters in an interview on Monday.

At the same time, the union hopes to convince Fiat suppliers that they should move facilities to UAW-represented plants in North America to produce parts for a more integrated Fiat-Chrysler and an upcoming raft of redesigned vehicles.

"We're going to be pitching to suppliers that they should come and locate here in Michigan," King said.

Chrysler, which was restructured under bankruptcy by the Obama administration, has been operating under the management control of Fiat's Marchionne for the past 16 months.

A trust fund established to pay health care costs for Chrysler's UAW-represented retirees owns 55 percent of the No. 3 U.S. automaker.

King, 64, who took charge of the UAW in June, said he has been impressed by Fiat's plans to revive Chrysler's vehicle line-up and his collaborative approach to the union.

"It's all about product. The plans Sergio has are really positive," King said. "That and his attitude of 'let's do it together'."

Marchionne had sparred with King's predecessor, Ron Gettelfinger, over his suggestion that U.S. auto workers needed to embrace a "culture of poverty," according to an account of a private meeting by former U.S. auto czar Steve Rattner.

Marchionne used a dealer meeting in Orlando, Florida last week to show off a range of redesigned Chrysler vehicles, including a new mid-sized sedan to replace the slow-selling Sebring that will be dubbed the "200."

The only all-new vehicle that Chrysler has introduced since bankruptcy is the Jeep Grand

Cherokee, a crossover SUV that has won praise from critics.

The Jefferson North plant in Detroit that produces the Grand Cherokee was the first Chrysler plant made over to conform to the Fiat manufacturing system the company describes as "World Class Manufacturing."

Marchionne said last week that his major job has been to "restore credibility and confidence in a company whose past economic and commercial failures are still too fresh and vivid in the minds of the public to be forgotten."

An initial public offering that would begin to pay down the UAW-linked stake in Chrysler is planned for 2011, Marchionne has said.

King will be joined in his meetings in Italy by UAW Vice President General Holiefield, who handles Chrysler negotiations, and Vice President Cindy Estrada, who is spearheading the union's organizing efforts.

Bob Ficano, Wayne County executive, will also be part of the delegation.