Report: Toyota could be moving more of its popular RAV4 production to Kentucky

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Toyota may move more production of its popular small sport utility vehicle to its Georgetown plant, according to sources cited in a new report.

President Donald Trump's 25% tariffs on foreign vehicles means many automakers are rethinking business and supply chain models.

Toyota manufactures the popular RAV4 in Georgetown, Canada and Japan, according to the company.

But three Toyota sources told Reuters the company may move more production to the Kentucky plant to avoid the 25% tariffs and to keep costs down.

The RAV4 Hybrid has been produced at the Georgetown plant since 2020. The Georgetown plant also produces the Camry and Camry hybrid. Toyota said it produced 77,282 RAV4s at the Georgetown plant in

Tovota officials declined to comment on the possible move, which would take several years to implement.

"We continually study ways to improve our manufacturing efficiencies to best serve our customers and provide stable employment for our team members. We have nothing to announce at this time and will not comment on speculation,"

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Toyota said in a statement provided to the Herald-Leader.

The RAV4 recently knocked off the Ford F-150 as the top selling car in the United States in 2024, according to Jato Dynamics, an automotive analytics group.

The RAV4 sales increased by 9% in 2024 over the prior year, according to Jato.

The RAV4 last remodel was in 2019. Toyota is set to unveil an overhaul in 2026. That may give Toyota time to make a switch to more manufacturing in the United States, according to Toyota insiders quoted by Reu-

The Georgetown plant is one of the largest Toyota manufacturing facilities in the United States.

In 2027, it is expected to open a \$922 million advanced paint operation, designed to help Toyota cut carbon emissions.

In 2024, Toyota said it employed 10,000 people at the Scott County plant. It's not clear if moving more production of the RAV4 to Kentucky will lead to the creation of more jobs.

KY'S ECONOMY IS DEPENDENT ON AUTO **MAKING**

Although much of the concern around new tariffs has centered on Kentucky coal or bourbon, automobile manufacturing employs nearly five times as many people as both industries.

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Kentucky is third behind Michigan and Indiana for American auto production.

The commonwealth has more than 550 automotive companies employing a combined 100,000 people, according to Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development numbers. Big automakers include Toyota in Georgetown, Ford in Louisville and Chevrolet's iconic Corvette plant in Bowling Green.

In comparison, 23,000 people work in Kentucky's other signature industry bourbon, according to the Kentucky Distillers Association. Coal mining employment has dropped to under 4,000 people, according to numbers from the U.S. Federal Reserve Bank.

The number of people employed in the automotive manufacturing is expected to climb in coming years.

A \$6 billion investment by BlueOval SK — a joint venture between Ford Motor Company and SK On — to build two plants in Hardin County to manufacture electric batteries was announced several years ago. The first of the two plants is scheduled to open in 2025.

BlueOval has delayed the production start date for the second plant.

Beth Musgrave: @HLCityhall

Equity Interest % of Ownership Certificated (Y/N)

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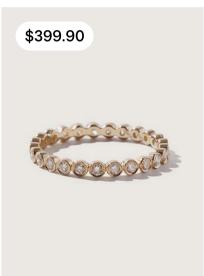
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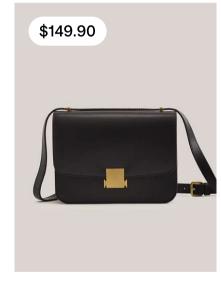
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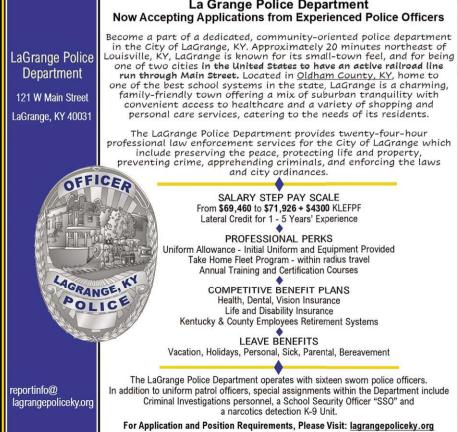


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