

ZF Chassis Systems is located in Tuscaloosa in a 206,600 square foot facility. The company opened it's doors in 1997 and is delivering to Mercedes-Benz U.S. International, Force Motors (India) & ZF Thailand. They currently employ 457 people.

I met with plant manager Brad Newman, who has been with the company about two years. Before working for ZF Chassis Systems, Mr. Newman **knew** this was the company he wanted to work for. He felt the company stood out (and still does) in the way they handle themselves in regards to management style, company culture and high respect of its employees. According to him there is not a better company to work for!

ZF Chassis Systems is a tier one supplier of the chassis (front and rear axles), front strut, rear spring and rear shock for Mercedes-Benz M/R/GL and C Class. Parts for the chassis come from 143 suppliers – 63 from NAFTA and 80 from Europe (or other). The SSS (front strut, rear spring and rear shock) operation uses 11 suppliers. The front and rear axles are assembled side by side and numerous robots can be seen involved in the process. The axles are all monitored for torque and angle and the data is recorded for future reference and validation. After the axle has been assembled it goes through corrosion treatment. From the time ZF receives an order to the time it will be shipped is approximately 280 minutes. Axles are assembled and shipped via conveyor chain on to a truck with conveyor belt. Forty five trucks with sequenced shipments leave for the two MB production plants in Vance on a daily basis.

The direct labor that starts out with six weeks of training is often found internally via current staff. Employees that have celebrated 15 years work anniversaries are proudly on display - 27 this year and 43 last year – needless to say that everyone seems to enjoy working for ZF. The Tuscaloosa based plant has celebrated 3 MILLION safe work hours and received North America's Safety Achievement Award.

ZF is a global leader in driveline and chassis technology with 122 production companies in 25 countries. In 2013, the company achieved a sales figure of \$23.2 billion with approximately 72,600 employees (more than half in Germany). ZF annually invests about 5 percent of its sales (2013: \$1.15 billion) in research and development. ZF is one of the 10 largest automotive suppliers worldwide. In North America, ZF has 22 locations; \$4,268 billion is sales in 2013 and 7,237 employees. According to ZF's CEO Dr. Stefan Sommer the US is an important pillar to ZF's business. The company's headquarters is based in Friedrichshafen in Germany. www.zf.com