

GM to hire 1,000 for tech center near Phoenix

BOB CHRISTIE - Associated Press - Associated Press

General Motors Co. will open a new information technology innovation center in the Phoenix suburb of Chandler and begin hiring what will eventually be 1,000 high-tech employees for the new location beginning in April, the automaker announced Wednesday.

The Chandler center will be the fourth facility GM has opened to bring its IT work in-house. It already has hired more than 1,000 new employees at the three other locations: Austin, Texas; Roswell, Ga.; and Warren, Mich.

GM officials said they chose Chandler because of the pool of talented IT workers and because Arizona's universities offer a steady stream of new graduates. They also cited the cost of living and quality of life in the state.

"Recruiting talented IT professionals is intensely competitive," GM Chief Information Officer Randy Mott said in a statement. "To hire the best and the brightest, we need to create employment opportunities that differentiate our company from the competition. Location is one such advantage."

The company will house workers in a temporary center in Phoenix until its new facility opens early next year. It's expected to be fully staffed in five years.

Matthew Benson, spokesman for Gov. Jan Brewer, said GM's \$21 million capital investment is a big win for the Arizona because competition was fierce for the jobs. There was speculation that GM was considering California's Silicon Valley and other locations around the nation.

"From our perspective it's huge, because of all the places they could have chosen to build, they're building here," Benson said.

The Arizona Commerce Authority is providing incentives to GM, including up to \$1.3 million if targets are met, money from a state job training fund and additional tax credits.

GM's four innovation centers will support all of the company's information technology needs, including Web technologies, dealer and factory systems, and new vehicle technology.

The automaker expects to staff the innovation centers with roughly 10,000 people in the next three to five years, Mott said in an interview. It has already hired 3,000 people from Hewlett-Packard Co. and moved 1,500 of its current IT workforce to the centers, and it plans to hire another 4,000 people in the near future.

Mott said the location of the four centers is extremely important because they're all

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in areas rich with technology talent. Combined, they're close to more than half of the top computer science and technology universities in the country. GM expects about 35 percent of its tech workforce to be recent college graduates.

The company plans to recruit software developers, database administrators, and system analysts. Mott conceded the competition is stiff now for information technology graduates and experienced professionals but said GM should be attractive because of the role that IT will play in the company's transformation.

"These are the best IT jobs out there," he said.

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AP Auto Writer Tom Krisher in Detroit contributed to this report.

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