

Thursday, July 17, 2008

## Aisin tech center may set up in Michigan

**Christine Tierney / The Detroit News**

Aisin Seiki Co. Ltd., a Japanese auto components manufacturer partly owned by Toyota Motor Corp., will establish a technical center to provide more and faster engineering and other services to its North American clients.

Aisin, a supplier of brakes, transmissions and other auto components, would not confirm the location but is likely to set up the new center in Michigan. Toyota and other Japanese automakers have built technical centers in the state, with encouragement from Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

The company already has a sales subsidiary in Michigan, Plymouth-based Aisin World Corp. of America, and a new proving ground in Fowlerville that opened in 2005.

The company's top clients in the United States are Toyota and General Motors Corp.

The Aisin Technical Center of America Inc. will employ about 70 people, most of them engineers and product design specialists transferred from other Aisin affiliates. But the center's work force also would include new hires, the company said.

"The establishment of Aisin Technical Center of America is consistent with the overall direction and organization of Aisin Seiki R&D -- having a stronger presence in the important markets we serve," said Don Whitsitt, president of Aisin World Corp. of America.

Tsuneo Uchimoto, a member of the Aisin Seiki board of directors, will be the center's first president.

Aisin, based in Kariya City, in Japan's Aichi province, employs around 10,000 people in North America, where it generated around \$3.7 billion in sales last year.

The company is 22-percent owned by Toyota.

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