

Cars made by Japanese automakers in U.S. hit record level last year



Factory worker Amy Washburn assembles Honda Motor Co. Pilot sports utility vehicle doors on the assembly line at the Honda Manufacturing of Alabama LLC facility in Lincoln, Ala. (Luke Sharrett, Bloomberg)

By **JERRY HIRSCH**

OCTOBER 3, 2014, 7:00 AM

Investment by Japanese auto companies in U.S. car manufacturing has hit record levels as auto sales continue their rebound from the Great Recession.

Auto production by the Japanese brands in the U.S. topped a record 3.6 million last year, said Ron Bookbinder, general director the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Assn.'s U.S. office. That's up 10% from 2012.

FOR THE RECORD

Oct. 10, 8:17 a.m.: An earlier version of this post misstated the percentages of Japanese car

companies' vehicles made in North America, saying that the figures represented the percentages of North American-made parts that go into the cars. The correct information has been substituted.

As production rose, the manufacturers purchased a record number of U.S.-produced auto parts. The companies spent \$57 billion with suppliers last year, an 11% increase.

About 94% of all Honda vehicles sold in the U.S. were made in North America, Bookbinder said, and about 71% of all Toyota vehicles sold in this country were made in North America.

Nissan provides more detail, he noted, and about 76% of that company's vehicles sold in this country were made in the U.S.

The Japanese car companies also set a record for the percentage of vehicles sold in the U.S. that were built in North America. That figure rose to 71%, from 70% a year ago.

“I would expect that to grow with the U.S. market,” Bookbinder said. “It’s been a trend that automakers want to produce cars in the markets where they are sold.”

Automakers are on track to sell about 16.4 million vehicles in the U.S. this year, according to IHS Automotive, the best since 2006, when the industry sold 16.5 million vehicles.

Japanese companies such as Honda and Toyota are reacting to that increase by expanding production in the U.S. and North America. The U.S. production helps the automakers cut back on import duties, shipping expenses and foreign exchange risk.

Follow me on Twitter ([@LATimesJerry](#)), [Facebook](#) and [Google+](#).

Copyright © 2014, Los Angeles Times