

US automakers wake up to clean cars

August 27 2012, by Jim Motavalli

Clean cars create jobs. The Big Three automakers, addicted to the profits they made off big SUVs, saw economic ruin in subcompacts, hybrids and battery-powered electric vehicles. But now they're all building them.

In the first half of 2012, the U.S. had the most fuel-efficient fleet of new passenger vehicles ever, averaging 23.8 mpg, compared with 22.7 in 2011. The [auto industry](#) has had some setbacks), but mostly it's recovered from 2009 and is on track to sell 14.1 million cars this year, 1.4 million more than in 2011).

It's working. The American automakers are profitable again. They managed to hold their noses and produce compacts, hybrids and tech breakthroughs like the [Chevy Volt](#) plug-in hybrid.

The [Natural Resources Defense](#) Council is out with a new report noting that the American auto industry has added 236,600 jobs since it hit bottom in June 2009. About 165,100 jobs were in manufacturing, and 71,500 were at dealerships.

-Michigan: The \$2.4 billion Department of Energy advanced battery program made a disproportionate number of its awards to Michigan-based companies, or those willing to put factories there.

-Indiana: 19,800 jobs in the auto industry have been added since 2009. Honda's \$40 million investment at its plant in Greensburg, Ind. That alone counts for 300 new hires. They are making the Civic Hybrid.

-Ohio. The Honda plant in Marysville recently built its 10 millionth Honda. The state also has General Motors' Lordstown [assembly plant](#) in Warren, which is making the fuel-efficient Chevrolet Cruze,. Lordstown is running three shifts, added 1,200 workers and now employs 4,200.

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