



‘Not Invented Here’ – What Ford Is Looking for with New Motor City Innovation Exchange and Jump Start Program

- Ford’s intellectual property licensing group to open Motor City Innovation Exchange providing a showroom for innovators to show off their creations to peers and potential customers
- Working with TechShop, the nonprofit AutoHarvest Foundation and Wayne State University’s TechTown, Ford is helping entrepreneurs commercialize their creations
- Ford Land is now offering the Jump Start program to provide more affordable work/hacker space along with support to help spur job-creating businesses

DEARBORN, Mich., May 31, 2012 – For more than a century Ford Motor Company has been a leading automotive industry innovator, launching breakthroughs in areas as diverse as manufacturing, safety, propulsion systems and vehicle design. Today Ford is reaching beyond its boundaries to encourage entrepreneurship and the sharing of ideas to facilitate innovation that can help not only the company, but more importantly, the community at large to create a better world.

“There was a time not so long ago in this business when ideas that were ‘not invented here’ got easily dismissed,” says William Coughlin, CEO, Ford Global Technologies, a wholly owned subsidiary of Ford Motor Company that manages the company’s intellectual property portfolio. “The competitive pressures in the auto industry today are greater than ever, with demands for improving quality, safety, technology and of course fuel efficiency, so we are both encouraging and looking for new ideas wherever we can find them.”

Ford is launching several major initiatives to support entrepreneurship and surface technological innovation in southeast Michigan. In addition to the recent improvement to the Patent Incentive Program that provides Ford employee inventors with a [three-month free membership to TechShop Detroit](#), Ford is also looking for new ideas from outside.

“TechShop is a place where entrepreneurs and other makers have access to over one million dollars of tools, software and high-end equipment that allow them to rapidly and inexpensively prototype,” said Mark Hatch, CEO of TechShop. “Innovation happens when you add community and crowdsourcing into the mix – which is exactly what the Motor City Innovation Exchange will do for our members, the automotive industry and anyone in the greater Detroit area who has an idea they want to turn into a reality.”

Motor City Innovation Exchange, AutoHarvest and TechTown

Creators with ideas that have been fleshed out need to put them into action and that’s where the Motor City Innovation Exchange comes into play.

“Bringing TechShop to Detroit was the critical first step in the creation of the Innovation Exchange,” says Coughlin. “It will be an open meeting place that will enable inventors to showcase what they create in TechShop and then negotiate, network and even sell their prototyped solutions to players in the automotive industry, from manufacturers and suppliers to research institutions and startups.”

The Innovation Exchange is also a physical extension of Detroit-based [AutoHarvest Foundation](#), a nonprofit organization set up by several respected automotive executives to facilitate connections between the industry and Metro Detroit’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. Ford Global Technologies, along with other automakers, suppliers, universities and research centers actively support AutoHarvest. The goal is to build a vibrant marketplace for licensing technological innovation across and beyond the auto industry.

Until now, there has been a major disconnect between having a great idea and being able to sell or license it to companies that can actually put it to use. For those not already in the industry, making the right connections to present a new concept or product has been a daunting task. AutoHarvest and Innovation Exchange hope to provide a platform for commercializing the intellectual property created by everyday inventors, industry insiders, universities and research labs.

[TechTown](#), the Wayne State University business incubator, will hold regular “office hours” sessions at Innovation Exchange to provide informal business support to TechShop members and other innovators. Exchange participants will be able to take advantage of free or low-cost workshops on a variety of relevant topics presented by TechTown instructors.

“Innovation Exchange is all about helping to spread the word about the innovation happening both inside and outside of TechShop, and giving the creators the foundational resources they need to understand how to sell and commercialize their idea and connect with the right players while respecting their intellectual property,” says Coughlin.

Jump Start Program

TechShop members with big ideas for a startup and a need for affordable working space can participate in a new Jump Start Program that offers discounted rental rates in Ford Land buildings in the Allen Park and Dearborn area.

Because of the diversity of projects being developed at TechShop, Ford Land will be flexible in providing suitable space that fits the specific needs of participants. The space, including locations adjacent to TechShop Detroit, can be used by individuals or small businesses for a variety of purposes including office, garage, lab and assembly use. Interested TechShop members can access information at <http://fordland.com>.

“Supporting innovation and entrepreneurialism benefits the entire region,” said Donna Inch, chairman and CEO, Ford Land. “By lowering startup costs, we will enable more businesses to get off the ground and have a better chance of being successful.”

“Like every industry, the automobile business was built and thrived on innovation,” said Coughlin. “As personal transportation is reinvented in the 21st century, the challenges facing the industry are greater than ever and fresh ideas are essential to success.”

“Ford is pleased to be leading the way through its connections with TechShop, AutoHarvest Foundation and TechTown,” he added.

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About Ford Motor Company

[Ford Motor Company](#), a global automotive industry leader based in Dearborn, Mich., manufactures or distributes automobiles across six continents. With about 166,000 employees and about 70 plants worldwide, the company's automotive brands include Ford and Lincoln. The company provides financial services through Ford Motor Credit Company. For more information regarding Ford and its products worldwide, please visit <http://corporate.ford.com>.

About Ford Land

Ford Land is a wholly owned subsidiary of Ford Motor Company and a full-service provider of real estate, construction and facility services. Ford Land owns a commercial office portfolio of more than five million square feet in Dearborn and Allen Park, Mich. For more information visit <http://fordland.com>

About AUTOHARVEST

AutoHarvest Foundation is a Michigan 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization and is led by some of the most highly respected figures in the automotive industry. AutoHarvest is designing and planning to launch a marketplace-driven Ecollaboration system that accelerates innovation in advanced manufacturing. AutoHarvest is guided by its peer interest group, which consists of over 70 prominent government, university, automaker, supplier, venture capital, business accelerator and manufacturing organizations. Located within the innovation hubs of the Southeast Michigan region including Wayne State University's Research and Development Park - TechTown - and the University of Michigan's North Campus Research Complex, AutoHarvest sits in the heart of NAFTA's automotive cluster. Recently awarded a grant by the New Economy Initiative Foundation ("NEI"), AutoHarvest is part of the NEI's Detroit Regional Innovation Network, a 10-year program to boost high-tech development and job creation in Southeast Michigan. For more information visit: <http://www.autoharvest.org>.

About TechShop, Inc.

Founded in October 2006, TechShop, Inc. is a membership-based, do-it-yourself (DIY) workshop and fabrication studio, providing access to a vibrant community of highly creative people and more than \$1 million worth of high-quality machines, tools, and software. TechShop offers instruction for people of all skill levels to get them started using TechShop's tools and equipment. With plans to expand nationally, TechShop is based in Menlo Park, CA, with current locations in San Francisco, San Jose, Raleigh, NC, and Allen Park, MI.

For information and course listings, visit <http://www.techshop.ws>, email info@techshop.ws or call 855-TECSHOP. You can follow TechShop on Twitter at "@TechShop." TechShop is also on Facebook as "TechShop Incorporated."

About TechTown:

TechTown is a community of passionate, diverse people and businesses driven by an entrepreneurial spirit to pursue extraordinary opportunities. Entrepreneurs join TechTown to gain guidance and get connected with resources needed for success. TechTown offers entrepreneurs unique access to Wayne State University's research, academic and technology assets. By reigniting an entrepreneurial culture, TechTown is fueling business growth, job creation and the revitalization of Detroit's Midtown and beyond.

For more information visit: **TechTown** <http://techtownwsu.org/>, or find us online at <http://facebook.com/techtowndetroit> or follow us on Twitter at [@techtowndetroit](https://twitter.com/techtowndetroit)

Contacts:	Alan Hall 313.594.3744 ahall32@ford.com	Becky Sanch 313.594.4410 bsanch@ford.com
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