



The plant produces aluminum-alloy wheels from British Columbia aluminum using low-pressure diecasting technology.

Toyota's

BRITISH COLUMBIA PLANT:

ROLLING AHEAD ON **FIVE MILLION WHEELS**

Since 1985, the \$100-million plant that Canadian Autoparts Toyota operates in Delta, British Columbia, has produced five million

wheels, enough — counting spares — to keep a million vehicles on the road. Reaching the five-million level was a historical marker in the history of a company that is a milestone in its own

right, and the company (known as CAPTIN in the automotive industry) took an afternoon off to celebrate the event in formal ceremonies held at the plant last May.

Dignitaries on hand included Mr. A. Takahashi, Executive Vice-President for Worldwide Production of Toyota Motor Corporation (TMC), who flew in from Japan for the event. Joining him in Delta were the presidents and vice-presidents of virtually every Toyota operation in North America.

As CAPTIN Vice-President Gary Smallenberg explains, the CAPTIN plant dates back to the mid-1980s, when all the Toyotas on North America's highways were products of plants in Japan.

"In a sense CAPTIN was a test case for Toyota," said Mr. Smallenberg, in an interview with

Canada Investment News. "It was the first manufacturing operation of any kind that TMC had established in Canada — and the second in North America."

CAPTIN's first assignment was to meet the needs of Toyota's manufacturing plants in Japan. The company has since broadened that mandate to include Toyota's North American assembly plants, including the company's award-winning facility in Cambridge, Ontario.

Commenting on TMC's choice of British Columbia as the site for production, Mr. Smallenberg says: "Being close to Vancouver — Canada's Pacific gateway — is a plus because we still ship a substantial share of our production back to Japan. We're also less than an hour's drive from the U.S. border and we have access to that market through NAFTA."

Power, people and aluminum

"In addition," says Mr. Smallenberg, "all the critical inputs are close at hand and plentiful. Energy — both hydroelectric and natural gas — is reasonably priced and abundant. British Columbia is also one of the world's leading sources of aluminum, our most important raw material. And we enjoy the benefits of a highly motivated and productive workforce."

These advantages are reflected in a superlative track record. The CAPTIN plant came into operation in 1985 and hit the road running. Production increased from 250,000 units in the first year to 500,000 in 1988-1989 and reached 750,000 in 1992. The plant now employs 185 people.

With Toyota sales booming and the new Cambridge, Ontario-assembled Solara sports coupe scheduled for roll-out in the fall of 1997, CAPTIN's production rate keeps rolling along. "We expect to produce one million wheels in 1997," says Mr. Smallenberg. ♦

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Set in a 25-acre site, the 19,000 square-metre plant at Delta, British Columbia, supplies Toyota facilities in Canada, the United States and Japan.

