

# Where We Stand in the Battle To Save the Machine-Tool Sector

by Nancy Spannaus

Approximately one year since Lyndon LaRouche raised the alarm over the need to save the U.S. automobile industry, as the core of the nation's machine-tool capability, from extinction, the future of that sector hangs in the balance. On the one side, thanks to inaction by the U.S. Congress, the major automobile corporations are engaged in a huge stripping-down operation, savaging wages, health care, payrolls, and plants, and continuing to be pushed, by the financial powers-that-be, toward outright bankruptcy. On the other side, there is a growing political momentum within the labor movement, Midwest political institutions, and sections of the Congress, toward adopting an emergency program to rescue the auto industry.

Sixteen hundred organizers of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union came to Washington, D.C. Feb. 6-8, to call on Congress to implement "a new Marshall Plan for the U.S. auto industry." Their proposal said "the Federal government should provide assistance to help auto manufacturers and auto parts companies to retool and expand existing facilities." Their initiative reflected intensive efforts by the LaRouche movement, around LaRouche's proposals for emergency Congressional action to fund conversion of auto capacity to rebuild desperately needed economic infrastructure, such as high-speed rail, and nuclear power plans.

Some in Congress are listening. Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.), who cochairs the recently founded Manufacturing Caucus, and has asked President Bush to convene an "auto summit," addressed the UAW meeting on Feb. 8. "The manufacturers and the UAW have called for a Marshall Plan. Well, let's marshal our resources and get it done. . . . We can give incentives to retool plants and build more advanced and cleaner cars like hybrids and everything else." Senator Clinton stressed, "If we don't manufacture in America, we cannot sustain our economic position, now and in the future. She compared such a "new Marshall Plan" to the Manhattan and Apollo Projects, and emphasized that "the market" didn't organize America's response to Sputnik, or earlier to Hitler's fascism. She accused the Administration of "wanting to undo the 20th Century . . . to turn the clock all the way back to [before] the Roosevelt Administration."

Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.) also addressed the meeting on his strong support for the UAW in general. He forecast

that the United States was going to lose 65,000-100,000 auto jobs in three or four years, but four to six times that many in the supporting glass, rubber, plastics, leather, and steel industries.

Despite these statements of good intent, however, the Democrats in Congress are still not picking up on the concrete proposals put forward by LaRouche, which would put the auto industry through strategic bankruptcy, and lay the basis for a rapid recovery through reemployment of auto's skilled labor on crucial projects.

## The LaRouche PAC perspective

Over the last year, the LaRouche Political Action Committee (LPAC), led by the LaRouche Youth Movement (LYM), has circulated hundreds of thousands of pieces of literature outlining the means by which the auto industry can be saved. This LPAC activity has inspired political leaders in state and municipal bodies, especially in the Midwest, to put forward resolutions memorializing Congress to take the retooling action required.

At present, such resolutions are pending in at least six states, including Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Tennessee. Similar resolutions have passed in several major formerly industrial cities, such as Cleveland, Ohio; Buffalo, New York; and Detroit, Michigan.

Realizing that every week of delay is bringing more dismantling of the machine-tool sector, as General Motors and Ford, and their suppliers, shut down factory after factory, LPAC has undertaken to prepare a new organizing tool to build support for emergency action: a DVD which combines reports on the current devastation being caused by auto shutdown, with the historical example of retooling of auto which Franklin Delano Roosevelt carried out in the early 1940s.

In mid-February, Bill Roberts and Adam Sturman of the LYM carried out video interviews with a number of trade unionists and political figures in the Michigan/Northern Ohio region, in preparation for the production of the DVD. We include below some segments of those interviews, which reflect not only the devastation being caused by the auto factory shutdowns, for whole communities, but also the reserve of optimism about how the proud skilled-labor backbone of American industry, can be mobilized for rebuilding our economy, which still exists among the population of the Midwest.

## LaRouche: Senate Must Stop Flim-Flamming, Save Auto

*This statement was issued by the LaRouche Political Action Committee on March 1.*

In the face of a new phase of collapse of the auto industry, including not only tens of thousands of layoffs, but also the threat of dismantling of General Motors, Democratic leader Lyndon LaRouche warned that the time has come for the U.S. Senate to stop flim-flamming around, and take action.

LaRouche himself began warning approximately a year ago, about the threat to the destruction of the machine tool capability of the auto industry, and issued several memoranda to the Senate making it clear what had to be done. Instead, the Senate has dilly-dallied, while the auto

sector has gone through a rapid plunge into shutdowns, plant closures, and layoffs, which threatens to get a lot worse.

The Senate has to act now, LaRouche said on Feb. 28. If it does not, it may be too late to stop an irreversible and chaotic collapse of the industry. Congressional leaders, particularly in the Senate, have had the time to understand the situation and absorb the principles of acting on it; they have heard from the LaRouche movement, and from auto unionists, how urgent their intervention is.

It is the responsibility of the Congress, especially the Senate, to take action for the general economic welfare of the population, LaRouche added. Either they do it rapidly, or they will be abdicating the leadership responsibility which is uniquely theirs.

Anyone needing to refresh his or her memory on LaRouche's proposals, and the political support which they have found among constituency leaders in the Midwest, can find them archived on [www.larouchepac.com](http://www.larouchepac.com).

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## Interview: Phil Cavanaugh

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### 'Our Tool-and-Die Industry Was Second to None'

*Phil Cavanaugh is County Commissioner of Wayne County, Michigan, which encompasses Detroit. He represents Dearborn Heights, Redford, Garden City—in total about 142,000 people. He is in his third term, and has served Wayne County for six years. He was interviewed on Feb. 7.*



**EIR:** Could you tell us a little bit about the history of Detroit? What sort of changes that Detroit's gone through over the years since World War II, up through the present?

**Cavanaugh:** Detroit has had a very rich history. As many people know, and fondly remember, back in World War II it was called the Arsenal of Democracy. When the Nazis were taking over all of Europe, and America finally got into the war in 1942, our country ramped up, and built airplanes, tanks, just anything they needed for the war effort, and it was built right here. Because of Detroit's positioning on the Great Lakes, on the Detroit River, its access to natural resources,

and its labor corps. People came from down South, people came from the Midwest. During the '40s and early '50s, there were over 3 million people in Detroit. It was a great place to live. It had great opportunity. It is the home of the three auto industries: Chrysler, GM, Ford all have their headquarters in Wayne County.

And over the years that has all dissipated. Today it is no longer the Big Three. Globalization has made Toyota, Mitsubishi, and Nissan all major players. It's questionable who is the top automaker at this present day.

Detroit had over 3 million people as early as the 1950s. The exodus started with jobs, and hence the people, during the 1960s. My father was mayor of Detroit from 1962 to 1970. It was a model city during those years, for its economic development, its renovation, but also for its racial progressiveness. My father was the first guy to appoint African-Americans to high levels in his administration. The city was, as the country was, going through a changing time. But the machine, the tool-and-die, the auto companies, were still strong. People were still buying cars. Our tool-and-die industry was second to none throughout the world.

There was Germany, Japan, and the United States, and the United States was seen as the frontrunner in the world. The best tools, the best cars. That has dissipated since then. There was a mass exodus of people and jobs through the '70s. And now, we sit here in 2006, there's a little over 800,000 people in the city of Detroit. It is questionable who the number one automaker is. The tool-and-die industry is gone, for all intents and purposes.

And that worries me, because in World War II, it was the Arsenal of Democracy. So, in war, we could look upon our

own people, we could look upon our own industries, to defeat the enemy. Now, if we have a war, America has all these planes and bombs, etc., but we don't have the tool-and-die industry, we don't have the mechanisms to make things ourselves, because we shipped that all overseas. We're going to globalization. But I consider it a national security issue. We can't take care of ourselves.

The auto industry's really hurting. Last week the Ford Motor Corporation announced 30,000 layoffs, throughout the Midwest. GM yesterday announced huge layoffs, dividend cuts. They cut their top executives' salaries by 50%. And it just seems like our President is fine with this. He says, our corporations need to be downsized. He has no problems with big oil reaping huge profits, where our tool-and-die industry is non-existent, and our auto industry is struggling at the best.

So, it was a better time when my Dad was mayor. Detroit has some promise. But what really worries me is the tool-and-die industry and the auto industry. *Everyone* is trying to redefine themselves. But in America today, redefining themselves means service jobs at Wal-Mart, or McDonalds, or gaming. Gaming and tourism seem to be most states' most industry. You can't sustain on that.

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## Interview: LaMar Lemmons, III

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# Deindustrialization Turned Smiling Neighborhoods to 'Snaggle-Tooth Housing'

*Michigan State Rep. LaMar Lemmons, III gave a video interview to Robert Johnson of the LaRouche Youth Movement early in February.*

**EIR:** I'd like to start by asking you about some background on some of what's happened to Detroit here in the last couple of decades. You grew up in Detroit, correct?

**Lemmons:** That's correct.

**EIR:** And you've been representing this district for how long?

**Lemmons:** Almost a decade now.

**EIR:** I wanted to ask in particular about, just what has been the effect in Detroit over the years, of this scaling-back of the number of people employed in manufacturing jobs? What's been some of the effects on the community, including things like education and drug use, and poverty? And how have some of these other factors interrelated with the problem of the collapse of industry in the city?



*LaMar Lemmons: "It's a fight, but that's what I'm used to."*

**Lemmons:** First of all, let me say this: As I grew up here, on the east side of the city of Detroit, the economy was basically booming; people could leave one factory and go to another if they were dissatisfied with the working conditions, or the management, or their treatment. There was a time when people were still migrating here from the South, to take advantage of these good-paying jobs here in the city. It was the largest homeowner population for African-Americans in the entire United States. And as I entered the workforce when I graduated from high school, there were many options, in terms of finding employment.

Many of those factories—most of those factories—almost *all* of those factories are gone. Those jobs and those opportunities have dissipated. And what's left, are young people who are no longer successful in getting an education, and the quality of education has gone down immensely; those who are able to achieve, leave Detroit, seeking better opportunities. So, it's become a town of the very poor, and the aging. That's the city of Detroit that I've come to know now. And so, I've been doing whatever I could to change those conditions, as a legislator.

As a legislator, I came in contact with Mr. LaRouche and his programs, and his programs were something that I had been advocating, prior to that, was just the Roosevelt program. I think that we need to institute Franklin Delano Roosevelt's program, the WPA, the Conservation camps, etc., because we are in a severe depression—not recession, *depression*—particularly in the African-American communities across in the United States; but not just in the African-American communities, cities throughout Ohio, and this entire region. People are unable to find gainful employment and enough to sustain a family.

**EIR:** You've recently taken up the call, echoing the call that LaRouche put out to the U.S. Senate, when he called on the Senate to really take the spearhead, in taking emergency action to retool the automobile and related machine-tool indus-

tries. I understand you've introduced a resolution to the Michigan State Legislature calling on the Congress to do just that, and convert, essentially, the automobile industry into an industry that's now going to be producing things that are probably going to have a much more beneficial effect on the economy as a whole, than just cars that are going to sit on a lot.

**Lemmons:** Exactly.

**EIR:** But, actually producing things like trains, power plants.

**Lemmons:** Trains, power plants. And if we're going to build power plants, it should be with the new technology, the fuel cell and the hydrogen fuel cell, in that direction. We can't lament that that time is gone, in terms of the auto industry and its competition.

But what I found interesting with Mr. LaRouche, is when he talks about building the infrastructure—and remember, Franklin Delano Roosevelt put people to work building these highways, and building the infrastructure of America, and the Tennessee Valley Authority, etc. Those type of things, those projects.

And not to mention the fact, that there needs to be a redevelopment of the urban areas throughout the United States, which are now aging and falling apart, because they were built almost a century ago. And so, Mr. LaRouche is the only one that I know, that is calling for that—in a serious call, and continuing to put on pressure, and not just throwing up his hands.

There are others who claim, "I talked to some Democratic colleagues," and they say, "Mr. LaRouche says he's the only one that says that, but I've said that." And I said, "But what are you doing about it? What are you doing? And how consistent, and where it is in terms of your priorities? Or have you just thrown up your hands?" See, I refuse just to say that "the other side of the aisle, the Republicans, won't do this or that"; that means it's time for *me* to take some other course of action. And so, I'm taking that course of action now. And I join with Mr. LaRouche in his call for the United States to institute an FDR-like recovery.

**EIR:** So, it's a fight.

**Lemmons:** It's a fight. But, that's what I'm used to. I mean, I grew up in the Civil Rights era, right after the Civil Rights era, when that baton was passed up, so I'm used to that type of fight. And Mr. LaRouche, and now his Youth Movement, are the only people that I see that are willing to engage in this fight. Too many people, again, are just throwing up their hands, and just saying "that's just the way it is"—and it doesn't have to be that way.

**EIR:** And I'm sure that some of the reactions that you get from Republicans and even Democrats on the state and Fed-



EIRNS/Steve Carr

*One of Detroit's devastated neighborhoods. Some have gone so far as to suggest that entire sections of the city be completely closed off, since the city is unable to provide infrastructure and support to the people who live there.*

eral level, are obviously going to be the question of "Where's the money going to come from?" How have you dealt with that question?

**Lemmons:** Well, first of all, we print the money! We decide. And Mr. LaRouche has come up with a plan—and I'm not an economist, so I have to step back on that one, so I defer to someone like a Mr. LaRouche, in his Hamiltonian approach to the economy in terms of the banking system, and putting these banks into reorganization, bankruptcy reorganization, and allowing the economy to be redirected in a way that would allow us to finance this type of development.

But, I think our greatest asset has to be the human capital that we're throwing away, generation after generation. And people, without any way of survival, will do whatever they can. First of all, half the population, or a percentage of the population, particularly in the African-American community, have just given up, and they don't know where to turn. They medicate themselves with drugs and alcohol. And it's created an industry—a legal industry and illegal industry, with both high alcohol and drug use in the community. And the people who sell, the illegal industry, the drugs, they've created that type of an environment. And when we go out [to film the area], hopefully we'll go over and see some of the abandoned factories—which is stark—but we can look at what some of the neighborhoods look like. And I can tell you, Detroit did not look like this, when I grew up as a kid.

**EIR:** What type of response have you gotten?

**Lemmons:** First of all, people try to marginalize Mr. LaRouche, and say that he's a fringe, or they make other types of disparaging remarks. I say, "Well, look: I'm not asking you to identify with Mr. LaRouche. I'm asking: Look at this

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*I've heard talk about building the infrastructure of Baghdad, after we bombed it, but I don't hear talk about building the infrastructure of our own neighborhood cities! We saw what happened to New Orleans, but Detroit has had an economic Katrina: An economic hurricane has hit Detroit.*

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program. Evaluate it on its own merit. And if it has merit, then we should do it. And if it doesn't, then we shouldn't." And, then there's little that they can say after that.

**EIR:** Hmm! Well, I'd like to switch gears for a second, because, I'd like you to describe some of the aspects of this process of collapse over the last 30 or 40 years, in terms of what's happened to the health-care system, the educational system, and so forth, as these good, high-paying, skilled jobs have left the area.

**Lemmons:** The immediate effect is, of course, on the family. Because in these areas, we have 70-80% of mothers bearing children out of wedlock, because fathers don't wed them because they don't have the jobs to take care of them, and the government steps in and provides these welfare programs. Then, there was a movement from the right, to attack the welfare programs, and to attack these women as being "welfare queens." The family has to have a support mechanism to augment the educational system. Even if you have the finest schools, when you go home, if you don't have the support, then your chances of success are greatly diminished.

The second part, of course, is that without the tax dollars to finance the other parts of the infrastructure, the hospitalization, etc., then we see a demise of those. And without the health care, without the people having the good-paying jobs with health care—because with the jobs came health insurance packages, which also allowed them to have good health care—now we see people using the emergency room as a primary source of health care, which is far more expensive. And in my area, we've had the closing of about four or five, six hospitals: Saratoga, Samaritan, one of St. John's hospitals; we've had Riverview close and another hospital take it over. So, we've seen the demise of the health-care system in this area.

And the quality of the education, again, without the parental support, you get young men, of adolescent age, without having fathers at home: You can imagine what they do. They form their own families, in gangs and other things. And all this is connected to having a good income; a good, strong nuclear family, which could help raise children, which helps support the school system, which helps support the other infrastructure, which is the hospitals, etc. So, we've had reductions in our police force, reductions in city services, all those things.

And, again, this is very complicated; I know, Mr.

LaRouche says it's very simple, but to the lay person—and I am included as a lay person—it's very complicated. So, I've known that I've had to come up with some type of solutions, otherwise I'm not worth my salt. When people elect me, they elect me to come up with solutions to make their life better.

**EIR:** Sure. Do you want to say something about some of these automobile factories?

**Lemmons:** There are so many factories that are closed. We're talking about the Cadillac plant, the Chevy plant—and sometimes I can't even find where they were, there's so much overgrowth and other decay, and it's blended. But at one point, there were thriving centers of employment, and those centers formed the community—housing and things built around the factories. People wanted to live in close proximity to where they worked. And people would shop in close proximity to where they worked.

And so, now we have total devastation.

**EIR:** You want to talk about the Model T?

**Lemmons:** Ah! The Model T and Highland Park, you know. Highland Park is a city within a city: It sits smack in the middle of the city of Detroit, and they have their own municipality. And there are all types of stories that Henry Ford wanted to keep it separate from the rest of the city, and so they were totally incorporated. But, let me tell you, it was a very middle-class to upper-middle-class place, that had—within 2.9 square miles—over 60,000 people. And all their activity, their management, and their workers centered around that Model T plant that was there. And of course, it went from Model T to other models, but it started off as the Model T. And today, again, another empty shell: Highland Park now has less than 12,000 people, and most of them are poor and aged. The housing decay is older.

And the same story throughout the United States, with urban centers: There's no urban redevelopment program. And Mr. LaRouche is the only one I've heard talk about urban redevelopment planning and building the infrastructure of our city. I've heard talk about building the infrastructure of Baghdad, after we bombed it, but I don't hear talk about building the infrastructure of our own neighborhood cities! We saw what happened to New Orleans, but Detroit has had an economic Katrina: An economic hurricane has hit Detroit.

**EIR:** And isn't Highland Park a city in receivership, to the state?

**Lemmons:** It is in de facto receivership to the state, and has a manager that manages, so the City Council and Mayor basically have no power.

**EIR:** Wow—so, you could say that what happened to Highland Park, that could happen to any city or town in Michigan, where you had factories just closing?

**lemmons:** What happened to Highland Park happened to all of Detroit, and that's just a microcosm. If it was a cell of a living body, you would say that this diseased cell has cancer. And that cancer is the deindustrialization of our society, and the lack of replacing those jobs with viable opportunities. Which is why I introduced House Resolution 13, which said: We take those factories, we take those industrial infrastructure, and we put something else there, whether there be trains—or, Mr. LaRouche talked about these maglev trains that use magnetic levitation, that really float—and we relieve some of the overcrowding and congestion at the airports; we have viable transportation.

We can take these same centers, and put people to work *rebuilding our cities*. For instance, the sewer system in the city of Detroit: Some of it is so old, that it has *wooden* sewer lines. We need to rebuild. But the city can't afford to rebuild its own sewer system—I mean, there are hollowed-out trees, still to this day, in the sewer lines!

**EIR:** I've noticed that the drainage around here has gotten really bad.

**Lemmons:** It is. It's terrible. It's terrible.

**EIR:** There's nowhere for the water to drain.

**Lemmons:** The entire infrastructure of this city, and other urban areas are the same. So, what needs to happen is, Mr. LaRouche's plan. First of all, this has happened over a period of time, and it's had an adverse effect on the family and the family structure. So now, we have a generation of people with no skills, who need to be trained, and I heard Mr. LaRouche talk about doing something similar to what FDR did, in terms of taking people out of these environments, which are toxic—I mean, socially toxic, in terms of raising families, in terms of developing the character of individuals. And these are the type of things that must happen. And he's the only one that is talking about it, is giving it a priority.

**EIR:** I've heard you use the term "snaggle-tooth housing" to describe some of the neighborhoods around here, where you have, on some blocks, only one or two houses—

**Lemmons:** Exactly. There was a smiling neighborhood; now, it's snaggle-tooth, which is a reflection of the poverty, like some of the people who cannot afford dental care. And so, in that neighborhood, it seems it can't afford to have consecutive housing in a nice neighborhood, and so we call it "snaggle-tooth housing."

**EIR:** When you have these neighborhoods that are cleared out like that, how able is the city to provide fire protection and police stations and things like that?

**Lemmons:** Good question: There have been suggestions, under another administration, that we close off entire sections of the city and move everyone out, and just close it off, because we can't afford to provide infrastructure and support for the population that's there—

**EIR:** And you could create a wildlife preserve for endangered fire hydrants!

**Lemmons:** I was about to say, that many of them have become overtaken by large trees and weeds, etc., and also it's hard to secure. And the city has difficulty, in maintaining its property.

**EIR:** So, it's really getting impossible for most people to even, just live and survive in Detroit.

**Lemmons:** It's very difficult, and it's very expensive to live in the city of Detroit. And so only the dedicated, the very wealthy, and the very poor. And a few of the trapped, which tend to be poor as well.

So, we've got a New Orleans situation. With any type of catastrophe, New Orleans-like, Katrina-like catastrophe, which could happen here probably with some blizzard or something—we could have similar effects. And at the same time, we're sending money "billions for Baghdad," as I say.

## UAW Workers Speak Out For Retooling Industry

*Here are excerpts from interviews conducted by a LaRouche Youth Movement camera crew early in February, with labor leaders in Ohio and Michigan.*

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### Interview: Oscar Bunch

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## For National Rail Grid, 'We Do Have the Skills'

*Oscar Bunch is a UAW Leader in Toledo, Ohio, who has been with the union for 54 years, and a union president for 28.*

**EIR:** Most people don't really have a very good sense at all of what a productive economy is, so I wanted you to describe a little bit, what exactly is entailed in a retooling process. How

does this process take place, when you take an entire plant and convert it over to some new product?

**Bunch:** Well, today, we've got more technology than we've ever had on new machinery. We've got computerized machinery, we've got ACM machines that are easy and adaptable. And we certainly have the ability to build them. We can change from one product to another better today than we've ever been able to do. We've got all the skilled workforce, and we've got the dedicated people. The American worker is the best productive person in the world, there's no question of that, and they proved that time and time again.



What it would take is an all-out effort from our leaders to say, "We've got to do this," and get the people on board to do it. Because once you get the people motivated, you can get it done. Because they're the people that's got to do the work.

Of course, in World War II, we had a crisis, people realized that we were attacked, and that we had to change. We really haven't motivated the people to do this change, but it can be done, if we had the right leadership.

**EIR:** How many workers do you estimate were once involved in the auto industry in just this area?

**Bunch:** We've had an awful lot of workers that have been displaced, laid off, and still haven't got jobs. The only job they can get is a \$7- or \$8-an-hour job. We've had plant closing after plant closing, and no industrial jobs for these people to get. This community here used to be—the granddad worked in the plant, and the dad worked there, and then the son worked there—and it's not that way any more. You can't find a job here.

**EIR:** I would imagine a lot of those people are highly skilled tradesmen, who would be pretty integral to being able to take the automobile industry, take a plant that right now is either building cars, or about to be closed down and the jobs outsourced. Do you think that a lot of these people could be just ready to bring back into a factory, and be ready to create, say, a new process for producing high-speed trains, or components for nuclear power plants, or something like that?

**Bunch:** There's no question of that. As you know, this country has more rail system right-of-ways than any country in the world. They just let it go to pot. Because, for one thing, the railroads sold off all of their scrap, to get the revenues to operate what they had left. We've got that whole rail system, the right-of-way for it, and it's just sitting idle. But we do have the skills.

A good example of what's happened here, after the Asians came here: The UAW had 500,000 numbers, just in General Motors alone, a half a million people working at General

Motors. Now, with this last 40,000 cut, they're going down to about 60,000 left. So, all of these people are out there someplace, ready to go. It just takes someone to mobilize them. . . .

That's a shame that the government has allowed this to happen, because we've got the resources here. We've got the skills, you can train them in something. But most of these people are in their late 40s and early 50s, and they don't have any desire to be trained in the type of technology that's coming now.

And I tell you, that the money's got to come from someplace. We can't service each other and polish each other's shoes. Some way we've got to have wealth, and the only way to have wealth, is to have an industrial base. We've lost that, and we need to get that back. We need to motivate the people to get that back. All the skills are still out there; we just need to utilize them.

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## Interview: Marty Green

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### There'll Be 40% Capacity To Machine Something Else

*Marty Green is a skilled-trades representative of UAW Local 730 in Grand Rapids, Michigan.*



**Green:** General Motors, Ford, Chrysler seem to be in a downsizing mode of the tooling industry, and naturally that brings a great concern, seeing as how it's an industry that has been thriving for many, many years. And it really bothers me, seeing as how all the manufacturing seems to be heading overseas, and we've lost a lot of different industries throughout America. And it's quite concerning that it's getting to this point. We've lost textiles and steel industries, and now, to totally lose our manufacturing base, frankly scares the hell out of me. And I'd like to see whatever avenues we've got to make a difference, I'd like to pursue them.

The tool-and-die industry at one time, has been a matter of national security, involved in building just about anything to do with metal, and when you take it a step farther, anything to do with plastic. We've got plastic injection molding and stuff like that, and everything is heading overseas.

**EIR:** Your plant is tool and die, or is tool and die part of what

your plant does?

**Green:** Our plant is a major production source for metal-stamping parts to do with General Motors. We have parts on just about every vehicle that General Motors makes. . . . There's 2,250 hourly folks, approximately; 300 salary folks along with engineers. . . . We do floor plans, doors, roofs, body side outers, and many, many internal parts. We've got quite a capability of producing dies there. It is General Motors' number one die-build source. We build, at our plant, approximately 40% of the General Motors North American dies that they build.

**EIR:** And now this plant is part of the restructuring that General Motors has announced?

**Green:** Market share's been shrinking. They want to align manpower capacity: At the end of November, they had mentioned about 12 plants closing in North America. Therefore, it affects our die-build numbers, our parts producing numbers at our plant. We have an Oklahoma plant that's closing, effective Feb. 20, 2006. We stopped shipping parts to them, back Feb. 6. That's about 15% of our volume in our plant, so it's a very significant thing. There's going to be parts that we're not producing, layoffs because of it, and these other 11 plants haven't even shut down yet. So, it's going to be a trickle-down, through everybody. They align manpower with parts moving out, so everybody'll be hit. . . .

When you mention infrastructure, there's a lot of things that could be done, and as a country, I hope we're heading that way, because there is a potential. And I see the plans right now, to reduce the die-making industry—just in General Motors; and I know Ford and Chrysler are all looking at the same thing—of reducing that industry by about 40% of [its workforce]. So, there is going to be an awful lot of knowledge, and a lot of people potentially sitting out there, that could be doing something constructive like that.

Just in the small town I live in, there's areas that bridges have been closed, because of things looking to fall down. I mean, we've been running this country on such a slim budget and not reinvesting in infrastructure, it is scary. Somebody needs to take charge, and I believe who we have in there right now, is *not* doing the job! And somewhere there's got to be starting putting the horse before the cart, and let's have a future in America. Because, right now, it's living day to day.

And, I think as far as infrastructure goes, the die-making base, or the plastic injection molding base, they're going to be critical in that, and they're going to have to—or, we're going to be producing stuff that we need in this country over in China, or over in India, and having it shipped over here. And I'm not looking for isolationism. I know it's a computer age right now, where we can hit a button and send information back and forth to places. But, there's got to be a line somewhere, that once we pass, we're giving up stuff that we can't return.

And, I'm hoping it's not in the next five years: I've got three young kids. I want to see that they're still here in America, and that we're still on somewhat of a manufacturing base here in America.

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## Interview: Joe Joseph

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### 'There's No Reason for These Plants To Close'

*Joe Joseph, president of UAW Local 1970 in Dearborn, Michigan, represents Body Cad Design workers.*



**Joseph:** I've worked for Ford Motor Co. for 40 years. And I've seen it go from designing on boards that are like 16 feet long on Mylar material, to three different updates in the computers that we use to design. There's been a lot of advancement and changes in the way we do our business. . . .

My feeling is that there's no reason for these plants to close, which was caused by this free trade. The American automobile industry has been left behind, and overshadowed by the foreign vehicles that are coming in. I think that something should be done about it. We have the facilities, we have the plants to manufacture parts. We have the design capability to design such items as mass transit, a high-speed rail system, which we'd be capable of designing, and also manufacturing in those plants which are becoming idle and may be sold—which would create jobs, for us, for suppliers. Just a numerous amount of jobs associated with the industry. . . .

**EIR:** Where do you think the future is, in the automobile industry? Do you see any possibility for diversification of the industry?

**Joseph:** Yes, I do. I see an open door there, to be able to diversity. We've got a lot of foreign car manufacturers coming into this country—actually it's increasing day by day. And, we all can't survive, I mean, there's just so many vehicles that you can sell. But, I think we need to switch, by the help of the government—the Democrats most certainly need to do something to help us out to diversify, by doing things such as that mass-transit railway system, and other things, that can be funded by the government, to help create more jobs and get the economy back on its feet. And without that, I think we're going to be lost!