

RED LOCKS TO TAKE OFF
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Beginning on February 17, 2018
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ASSEMBLY REQUIRED



Visitors to the Vehicle Assembly Center for Automotive Research located in the Greenville Technical College Center for Manufacturing Innovation watch a demonstration of a Low-Cost, Flexible Visual Inspection Assistant on Thursday.
BART BOATWRIGHT/STAFF

Vehicle Assembly Center next big step for state's advanced manufacturing sector

Haley Walters Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK - SOUTH CAROLINA

Clemson researchers and Greenville Technical College students have a brand-new 4,000-square-foot facility to develop assembly line technology.

The Vehicle Assembly Center, unveiled Thursday afternoon, is

the latest addition to Clemson University's Center for Advanced Manufacturing. The assembly center will take a new approach to advanced manufacturing education by having students work closely with researchers and industry experts.

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"This is a center for innovation that is going to serve not just the Upstate, but it will serve factories worldwide."

Laine Mears
Vehicle Assembly Center director and SMW SmartState chair at Clemson



Grad student Doug Chickarello, left, talks during an EEG demonstration Thursday. BART BOATWRIGHT/STAFF

Assembly

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"This new center will provide opportunities for Clemson engineering students to collaborate and work in multidisciplinary teams with wonderful students from Greenville Tech, bringing future engineers and technicians together to work with world-class researchers on the latest advanced manufacturing technologies," Clemson University President James Clements said.

The schools partnered with German automaker BMW and Illinois-based Siemens Manufacturing on the center. The companies will help Clemson researchers develop assembly line improvements and also provide an industry perspective during the teaching process.

"Looking into the production of cars, we need to have maybe even brighter and even sharper associates and engineers. ... We need to make sure we are hiring the most efficient and most intelligent car manufacturers in the world," BMW Manufacturing President and CEO Knudt Flor said.

The idea to overhaul the advanced manufacturing curriculum was a response to manufacturers' demand for skilled workers, Greenville Technical College President Keith Miller said.

"As we started coming out of the recession, I started hearing from a lot of manufacturers that we have a critical situation. That critical situation is a skills gap — a shortage of skilled workers — and that gap still exists today," Miller said.

Laine Mears, Vehicle Assembly Center director and SMW SmartState chair at Clemson, said the research done at the facility has the potential to change the future of manufacturing.

"We've been working on this for five years, and this is the realization of it. This is a center for innovation that is going to serve not just the Upstate, but it will serve factories worldwide," Mears said. "The Vehicle Assembly Center is a new national model for industry-driven research and education."

The facility is at Greenville Technical College's Center for Manufacturing Innovation, which is adjacent to the Clemson University International Center for Automotive Research.