

Systems Automotive Interiors Alabama Receives National MBE Certification

October 4, 2021

ATHENS, ALABAMA

Athens, Alabama-based Systems Automotive Interiors Alabama (SAIA) announced today that it had secured its certification as a nationally recognized minority business enterprise (MBE) from the National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC). Chartered in 1972, NMSDC members include such large public and privately held corporations and public sector organizations as Toyota, Mazda, Regions Bank, Motion Industries, Chevron, Marriott International and Lowe's. Each NMSDC member is interested in ensuring that its supply chain represents the diverse communities in which it operates.

A joint venture between Mississippi-based, woman-owned Systems Enterprises, Inc. (SEI), Toyota Boshoku America, Inc. (TBA), and AKI USA Corporation, (AKI), SAIA represents Toyota's and Mazda's firm commitment to doing business with small women-owned and minority suppliers not only in north Alabama but also in the southeastern United States. SAIA Chief Executive Officer Toni Cooley said today that she is proud to be affiliated again with the global mobility leader, Toyota Motor Corporation, and that she is honored to have secured business for the first time with Mazda Motor Corporation. Serving as a Tier 1 supplier for the Mazda Toyota Manufacturing, U.S.A., Inc. plant in Huntsville, Alabama, SAIA will assemble all the seats for the Mazda and Toyota vehicles manufactured at that facility. In partnership with TBA, SEI does similar business through Systems Automotive Interiors, a Tier 1 supplier of seats for the Toyota Corolla manufactured at the Toyota Motor Manufacturing Mississippi facility in Blue Springs, Mississippi.

"Systems has long viewed the local workforce as this nation's competitive advantage. We are unmatched when local talent is harnessed, knowledge is gained, and skills and abilities are honed. When coupled with our work ethic, the opportunities for innovation grow exponentially. The collaboration and teamwork with our Japanese auto parts business partners will help ensure that the next generation of American auto manufacturing occupies a dominant place on the global stage," Cooley said.

"When we see vehicles built with parts that we have manufactured traversing the streets of Alabama and across the nation, I hope that our team will be proud of the value they bring to their families, our communities, and the national economy", Cooley added.

SAIA's Limestone County-based plant will directly create a total of 181 jobs, and with collaboration with TOYOTA BOSHOKU AKI USA, LLC (TBAKI) which is also Joint Venture of TBA and AKI USA, seat component parts manufacturing company for SAIA, will create 558 jobs total when the Toyota and Mazda seat assembly lines are in full production by the end of 2022. Mazda Toyota Manufacturing will officially start production during September 2021, with the ramping up of the manufacture of the Toyota Corolla Cross and, in January 2022, start production of the CX-X (provisional), Mazda's first SUV made in America. According to Michael Thomas, SAIA's President, the two assembly-line facility will generate 150,000 seats annually for each of the automotive manufacturers' vehicles and will assemble a variety of different seat types.

Systems Group of Companies, of which Cooley is majority owner, is based in Mississippi and includes Systems Electro Coating, a Tier 1 supplier for Nissan North America's Canton, Mississippi, facility that sells electrocoated frames and parts for Nissan trucks, SUVs, and certain passenger vehicles; and Systems Consultants Associates, Inc., a 44-year-old management training and consulting firm that specializes in vocational training, small business development, and project management. Finally, Systems' philanthropic interests are advanced through its nonprofit Center for Social Entrepreneurship which operates to harness talent, eliminate blight, grow business, and engage civically in the western part of Jackson, Mississippi, where Systems Group is headquartered.