

# Arlington, Texas Assembly Plant

## Tour the Assembly Plant That Never Sleeps!

by Tom Brackett



**ALL** of us in the Pontiac hobby here in North Texas have warm feelings for the massive GM Arlington Assembly Plant.

The great news from the Lone Star Chapter is that you will have a unique opportunity to tour this historic facility during our POCI convention week activities!

Located right in the middle of the Metroplex on State Highway 360, it is one of GM's largest facilities, comprising nearly 4.5 million square feet! Sitting on a 250 acre site, Arlington opened on January 6th, 1954 and was GM's first air conditioned plant.



It is no coincidence that the first vehicle Arlington produced was a Raven Black Pontiac Chieftain 4-door! It was soon followed by tens of thousands of big, beautiful Pontiacs each and every model year through 1970.

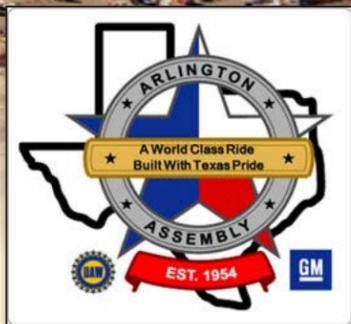
Since 1954, Arlington has produced nearly 11 million vehicles, including hundreds of thousands of full-size and mid-size Pontiacs between 1954 and 1970. In addition to Chieftains, Arlington made Starchiefs from 1954 to 1959, Catalinas and Bonneville's from 1960 to 1970, and the stylish Ventura from 1960 to 1967.

The Arlington plant also produced the stunning new-generation Pontiac A-bodies for the 1968 model year, including *Motor Trend's* Car of the Year — the gorgeous GTO. Intermediate model production for the Tempest, LeMans, and GTO series continued through 1970.

One of those special GTOs built in 1970 was none other than *Smoke Signals* editor Tim Dye's spectacular Mint Turquoise Judge — just ask him about that "BT" plant code on his trim tag, or the "R" in his VIN! (And, if your prized Pontiac also has a "BT" on its trim plate or an "R" in the VIN, then you, too, own a part of this factory's proud legacy.)

Today, approximately 1,200 full-size SUVs are assembled there daily, six days a week. This state-of-the-art plant operates around the clock with three shifts, requiring most maintenance to be performed on Sundays. Arlington is supported by a workforce of 4,600 strong, earning wages of \$1 million per day.

Over a thousand robots also help crank out the award-winning GMC Yukons, Chevy Tahoes and Suburbans, and Cadillac Escalades at the rate of 50 vehicles per hour. These models have an amazing 75% market share in the U.S., and are also exported to numerous countries around the world. As you may know, these heavy duty platforms are a favorite of government agencies everywhere!



In mid-2015, GM approved a \$1.4 billion expansion of the plant to be completed by mid-2018. That will increase Arlington's size by 30%. Much of the growth will be in the paint and body shops.

And, because GM so heavily depends on Arlington's huge production capacity as their only domestic full-size SUV plant, this new expansion project has the challenge of not impeding with the speed of the established assembly lines. You will learn all about how this is done when you take the tour.

Arlington is also preparing to go "all green" in 2018 by purchasing 100% of its power needs from renewable wind sources.

They will be the first GM factory to be totally reliant on renewable energy! (Arlington currently gets about 50% of its power needs from renewable sources.)

We're certain you'll be fascinated by the world-class technology in place throughout the high speed assembly line. Enjoy viewing all the multitude of parts and panels coming together with precise timing as each unique SUV is produced.

Be sure to sign-up early for either the Tuesday, July 11 or Thursday, July 13 tour and experience firsthand one of the most advanced SUV assembly plants on the planet. Don't miss it! **JN**



Here is a list of overflow hotels and the reservation numbers for 2017.

- 1- Hilton Garden Inn, 1-817-562-3047
- 2- Hampton Inn & Suite's, 1-817-439-0400
- 3- Candlewoods Suites, 1-817-838-8229
- 4- Courtyard Marriott Fossil Creek (not the host), 1-800-321-2211
- 5- Residence Inn Marriott (not the host), 1-817-750-7000



Tim Dye's 1970 GTO Judge assembled at the Arlington, Texas plant.