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# Progress for America's Auto Communities

MAY 21, 2010 AT 4:00 PM ET BY ED MONTGOMERY



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**Summary:** Ed Montgomery, Executive Director of the White House Council on Automotive Communities and Workers, talks about a big week for communities built around the American auto industry.

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On Tuesday the President gave a [sweeping talk on the economy](#) to some hard-working folks in Youngstown, Ohio. I want to emphasize one particular part of his address:

Today my administration is announcing a landmark agreement to help dozens of communities like Youngstown revitalize and redevelop old, shuttered GM facilities, preparing them for new industries, new jobs, and new opportunity.

That's exciting news for auto communities.

The same day, the White House Council on Automotive Communities and Workers, US Department of Labor, Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, and Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities came together to co-sponsor Auto Communities and the Next Economy: Partnerships in Innovation, a summit held in Washington, DC.



Ed Montgomery, Executive Director of the White House Council on Automotive Communities, speaks on challenges and solutions for auto communities, May 18, 2010. (by Paul Morigi)

The event brought together about 300 people from Michigan and Ohio down to Alabama and Louisiana, from California across to Delaware. There were auto suppliers, union officials, colleges and university leaders, foundation and community based organization heads, economic development experts as well as members of Congress, as well as federal, state and local government officials who came to discuss the challenges auto communities still face and ways in which these entities can effectively partner together to solve these problems. We not only talked about the issues, but concrete actions were taken.

At the summit, Council Co-Chairs Larry Summers and Secretary Hilda Solis announced a federal framework to speed the cleanup of and redevelopment of shuttered auto facilities resulting from the GM bankruptcy. The framework will invest more than \$800 million to put facilities back into productive use, creating jobs and economic growth in communities across the country.

The framework would allocate \$536 million for the cleanup of the properties and approximately \$300 million that will assist the states and communities in dealing with the challenges these properties present, including property taxes, demolition costs, plant security costs and other expenses. These funds will be allocated among over 90 sites located in 14 states across the country and include additional pooled funding that will be available to all sites owned by Old GM as needed to cover unforeseen costs.

Based on current information, these funds should be sufficient to clean up 90 sites owned by Old GM and undertake targeted cleanup at certain additional sites where Old GM bears unique responsibilities for environmental contamination. Our partners at the Environmental Protection Agency, United States

Treasury, and the Department of Justice were critical partners in putting this framework together in record time.

It was so exciting to be able to share this news directly with so many of the people who have been impacted by this issue the most. Governor Granholm put it best after the announcement when she exclaimed, "Let me just start out by saying, 'Woo-hoo!'"

- [Learn more about this landmark effort from the White House fact sheet.](#)

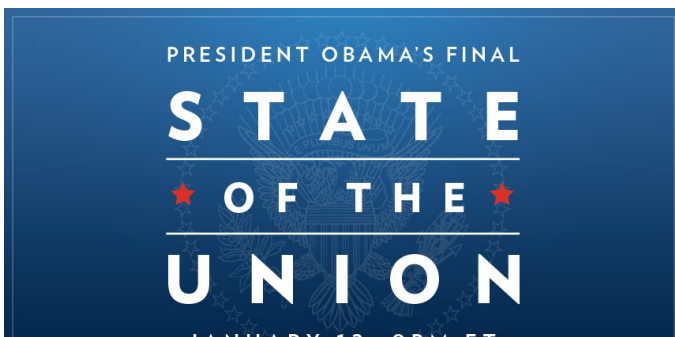
In addition, our partners at the Ford Foundation announced a [five-year, \\$200 million effort](#) to help transform the way that cities, suburbs and surrounding communities grow and plan for the future, promoting a new metropolitan approach that interweaves housing, transportation and land-use policy to foster greater economic growth.

At the summit we released the first Annual Report of the White House Council on Automotive Communities and Workers. This report highlights the Administration's work with you over the past year to support your communities. It's been a privilege to work with you over the past year, and I hope you take a moment to read through it and learn more about the Council's efforts and why your communities are so important to us.

- [Read the White House Council on Automotive Communities and Workers report \(pdf\)](#)

While yesterday brought important developments that will help many auto communities across the country, we know more needs to be done. We look forward to continuing to partner with auto communities, their states and towns, business and labor, philanthropy and all of our partners to find new ways to support your efforts. To keep up with all we're doing, [sign up for regular updates](#) from the White House Council on Automotive Communities and Workers.

*Ed Montgomery is Executive Director of the White House Council on Automotive Communities and Workers*



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