

Cibolo breaks ground on automatic transmission plant

By [Jeff B. Flinn](#)

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Photo: Jeff B. Flinn /Staff



Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, right, shakes hands with Kazuhisa Osaki, Aisin AW president, during the Nov. 4 ground-breaking ceremony for the firm's \$400 million automatic transmission plant in Cibolo.

Cibolo rolled out the red carpet for esteemed guests from Austin and abroad as it broke ground last week for the AW Texas automatic transmission plant that will employ as many as 900 people once it opens in 2021.

AW Texas Inc., owned by Aisin, a Fortune 500 company, is part of Toyota's network of suppliers which includes the automaker's Toyota plant on the South Side of San Antonio.

But the activities of the day on Nov. 4 focused on the city of Cibolo and its partnership with Aisin AW. Several speakers extolled the collaboration and cooperation that took place over a period of several months in order to bring the plant, and that day's guests from Japan, to Cibolo.

Gov. Greg Abbott spoke and welcomed Aisin AW and AW Texas officials to Texas and praised the cooperation between city, county and state entities to get

"This is a team effort. Nothing like this ever happens by chance," Abbott said. "This is something that will put Guadalupe County and Cibolo on the map. What you will see in the coming years is this was a beginning of a chapter that will lead to chapter after chapter of a great book about this entire region."

Abbott said the relationship that has developed between Aisin AW officials and leaders from at the city, county and state level has grown and will prove to be continually productive.

"Today we celebrate the 'Made in Texas' label along with the \$400 million investment and 900 new jobs that Aisin is bringing to Cibolo," the governor said. "This is great business not just for Aisin, not just for Toyota, it's great business for all the businesses in the region.

"This is why Texas has risen to the very pinnacle of the economic strata in the U.S., becoming a national leader in job creations, achieving record-low unemployment, being listed as the best state for doing business in the United States for 15 years in a row," he added.

Cibolo City Manager Robert Herrera welcomed and introduced Aisin AW President Kazuhisa Osaki and Satoru Kasuya, president of AW Texas, to the hundreds gathered under tents on the 15.9-acre parcel — former Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative land upon which AW Texas will construct the 500,000 square-foot plant that will manufacture automatic transmissions for Toyota products.

“This is the largest capital investment project that we are experiencing in the city today. We anticipate this to be the catalyst for additional economic development projects in the years to come,” Herrera said. “We anticipate a second phase to be announced by AW Texas in the next five to seven years, and we’re hoping it’s a shorter timeline.”

Abbott spoke of a trip to Japan that a Texas delegation made in the weeks that followed the AW Texas announcement. A point made during that trip, he said, “is the unique approach that Texas has to economic development. We view ourselves as genuine partner with these businesses.

“There’s one thing that we understand is that when Aisin succeeds, when Toyota succeeds, when every business in Texas succeeds, Texas as a state succeeds,” he said. “We are there as partners in your business. We want to do everything you need for us to help you succeed, because it’s going to be good for you, the county, it’s going to be good for the Lone Star State.”

Guadalupe County Judge Kyle Kutscher spoke on the county’s behalf, joining Cibolo Mayor Stosh Boyle and GVEC CEO Darron Schauer behind the podium in welcoming AW Texas and its leaders to the city.

Aisin AW President Osaki said the firm looked at many sites “and we looked at what kind of people we can hire and that is the conclusion that this was the best place for us to have a site.” Next fall, he said, “there’s going to be a building here. We will start production in 2021. We will start hiring many people after fall next year.”

Salary ranges for the 900 jobs s expected to be in the \$42,000-\$44,000 range for a majority of plant workers.

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