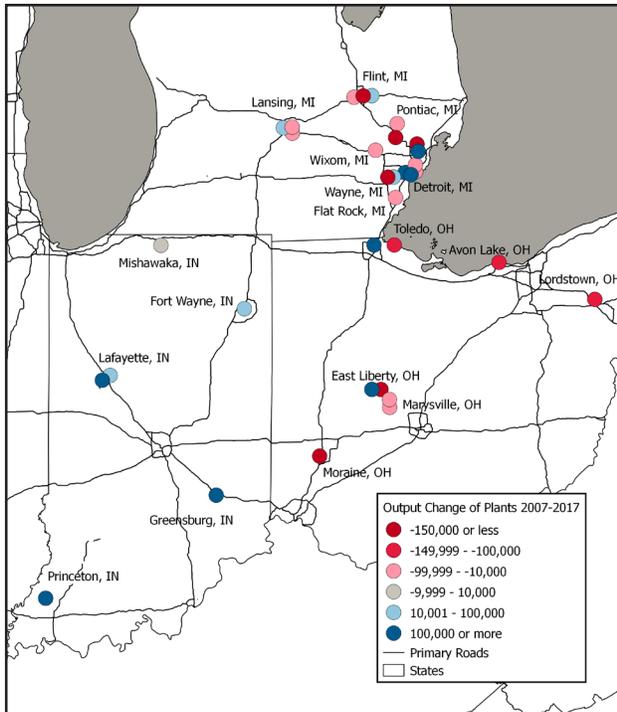


# GREAT LAKES ECONOMY

The strong shift in predilection among consumers away from traditional cars to CRVs, SUVs, and light trucks has also affected the Great Lakes states, of course. Besides the changes that Ford Motor Company announced to its lineup produced at the Michigan Automotive Plant in Wayne, Michigan—discussed on the preceding pages—plants in other Great Lakes states are also grappling with this move to CRVs and SUVs. Here is a sampling of developments across the five Great Lakes states reflecting this trend.

## Change in Automotive-Plant Production in Three Great Lakes States, 2007–2017



SOURCE: *Automotive News*.

the automaker adapts to the markedly slower demand for cars. The cuts were scheduled to take effect in mid-June, when the plant will slow production by halting one of its two shifts. Until this month, the Lordstown plant employed slightly less than 3,000 workers, but up to half of these could be affected by the downsizing.

The plant builds only the Chevy Cruze, which comes in compact and hatchback versions and has been produced since 2008. However, sales of the Cruze have declined 28 percent this year—a drop more than twice as steep as car sales in general, which have fallen off by just over 13 percent, according to the firm Autodata. Last year, GM sold 184,000 Cruze vehicles in the United States. That number was down 32 percent from just four years ago, when the Cruze surpassed 273,000 in unit sales. Until early 2017, the plant had run assembly lines on all three shifts, but the gradual slide in sales forced it to cut back to two shifts, and this month it goes to one.<sup>2</sup>

**Indiana:** Indiana's Fort Wayne Assembly Plant, a factory in Roanoke employing 3,900 workers, produces vehicles on the company's GMT K2XX vehicle platform, including the Chevrolet Silverado, which began production there this year, and the Silverado's mechanically identical twin, the GMC Sierra, both full-size pickups. This spring, the plant was looking to add workers to its second and third shifts, with plenty of overtime available.<sup>3</sup>

**Wisconsin:** Wisconsin has no automotive assembly plants, since the Janesville plant closed in 2009.

**Michigan:** Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) ceased production of the Chrysler 200 at its Sterling Heights Assembly Plant in December 2016, as sales of the midsize sedan had plummeted by more than 60 percent, forcing layoffs and shift eliminations. The Sterling Heights plant subsequently received a \$1.49 billion retooling to build the Ram 1500 pickup (production began in January) and the all-new, full-size Jeep Wagoneer, which may debut in 2020.<sup>1</sup>

**Illinois:** The Belvidere Assembly Plant, an FCA factory which opened in 1965, previously made various compact sedans for Dodge, including the Caliber and the Dart. The facility also produced the Compass and Patriot SUV models for Jeep until production of those recently moved to Toluca, Mexico. So, as of 2017, the plant only produces the Jeep Cherokee crossover SUV, the latest version of which was unveiled this past January at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. Prior to that, successive editions of the Cherokee had gradually shed its boxy shape, until it now has completely assumed the sleek lines of a CRV.

**Ohio:** General Motors eliminated several hundred jobs at its Lordstown plant this spring as

1. *Chicago Tribune*, "Fiat Chrysler to Move Jeep SUV Production from Belvidere to Mexico," April 27, 2016.

2. CNBC.com, "GM cuts several hundred jobs at Ohio plant as car sales continue to slide," April 13, 2018.

3. WPTA21.com, "Fort Wayne Assembly Plant Looking for Production Workers," March 19, 2018.