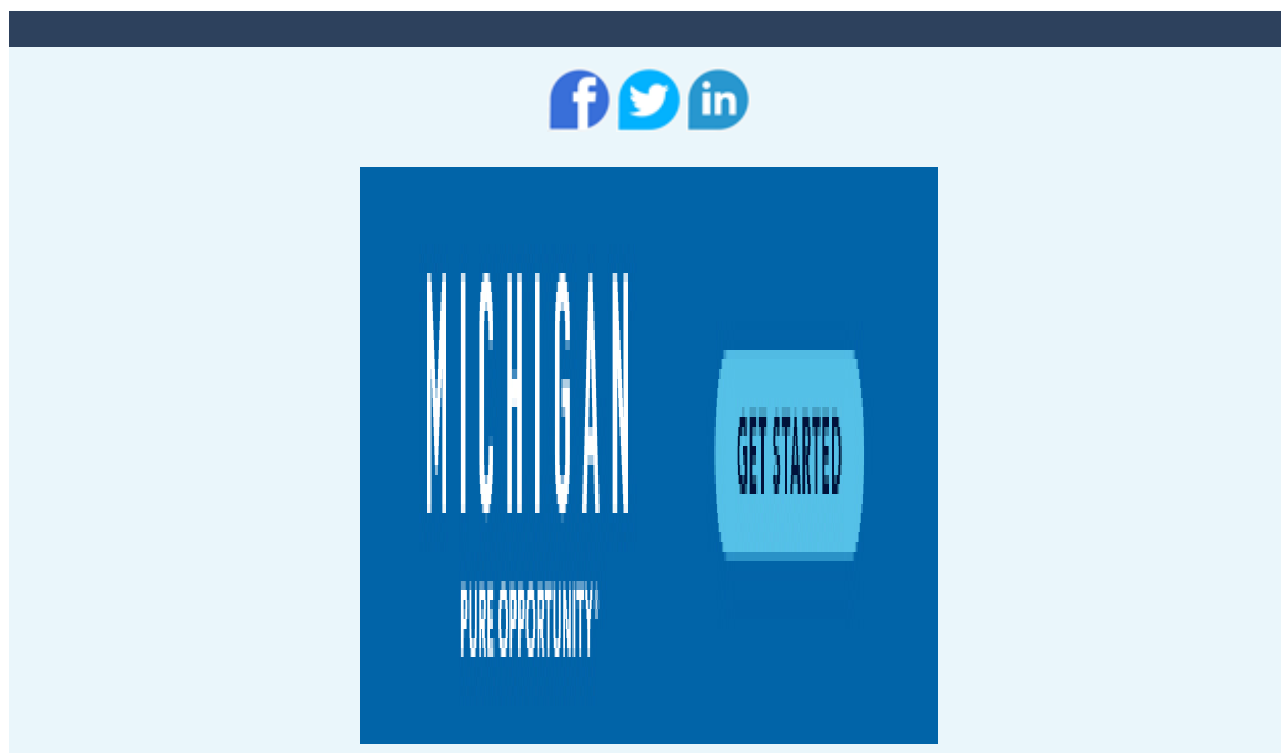


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LEGO builds out its supply chain in Virginia; Kimberly-Clark will invest more than \$2 billion in Ohio and South Carolina. ODATA reaches a milestone with its \$3 billion data center campus in Mexico.

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FROM SITE SELECTION MAGAZINE, MAY 2025 ISSUE



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Data Centers Are Increasing in the Great Lakes at What Cost?

Helena Volzer, senior source water policy manager at the Alliance for the Great Lakes, considers a fundamental question facing the region with the world's largest supply of surface freshwater.

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NORTH AMERICAN AUTOMOTIVE

Electrification Accelerates Stateside

A visit to BMW's South Carolina plant and some choice words defending that site's economic development impact headline Alexis Elmore's report on a sector befuddled by tariffs but moving forward with projects nevertheless.

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FROM THE ARCHIVES



Hyosung Heavy Industries is expanding transformer manufacturing capacity at this Memphis plant not far from where xAI needs a transformer for its giant data center.
Photo courtesy of Hyosung

Observers continue to watch with fascination and/or concern over power and water as xAI, the artificial intelligence company led by Elon Musk, moves forward with Colossus, a data center campus in Memphis that Musk has said will eventually be the largest supercomputer in the world. Where exactly is it located? On a site formerly occupied by Electrolux at Frank C. Pidgeon Industrial Park in the city's Boxtown neighborhood. Site Selection saluted the Electrolux plant as a 2010 Top Deal of the Year after the company moved the operation there from Quebec.

One aspect of the xAI project, Bill McKibben reported in *The New Yorker* last week, is the offer by the company to build a needed transformer itself because of a current shortage of transformers. Site Selection in March 2011 chronicled a major investment by Mitsubishi Electric Power Products Inc. (MEPPI) in a new transformer manufacturing facility just east of the Electrolux site. MEPPI in December 2019 announced the sale of the facility to Hyosung Heavy Industries, which two months ago announced it would invest hundreds of millions of dollars to double the transformer plant's capacity. Because of investments by Hyosung, SK Innovation and others, the Greater Memphis Chamber and Memphis in May International Festival in December announced South Korea as the 2025 honored country.

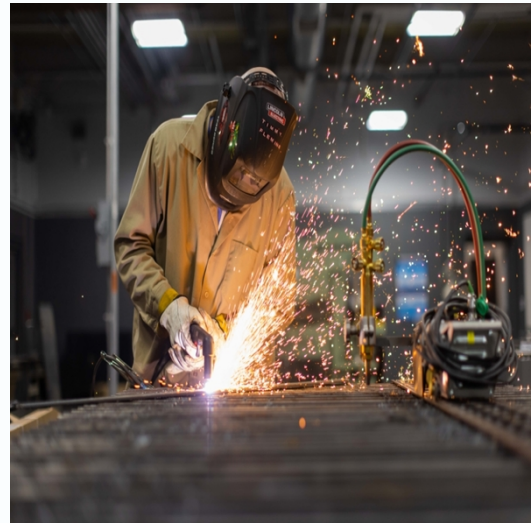


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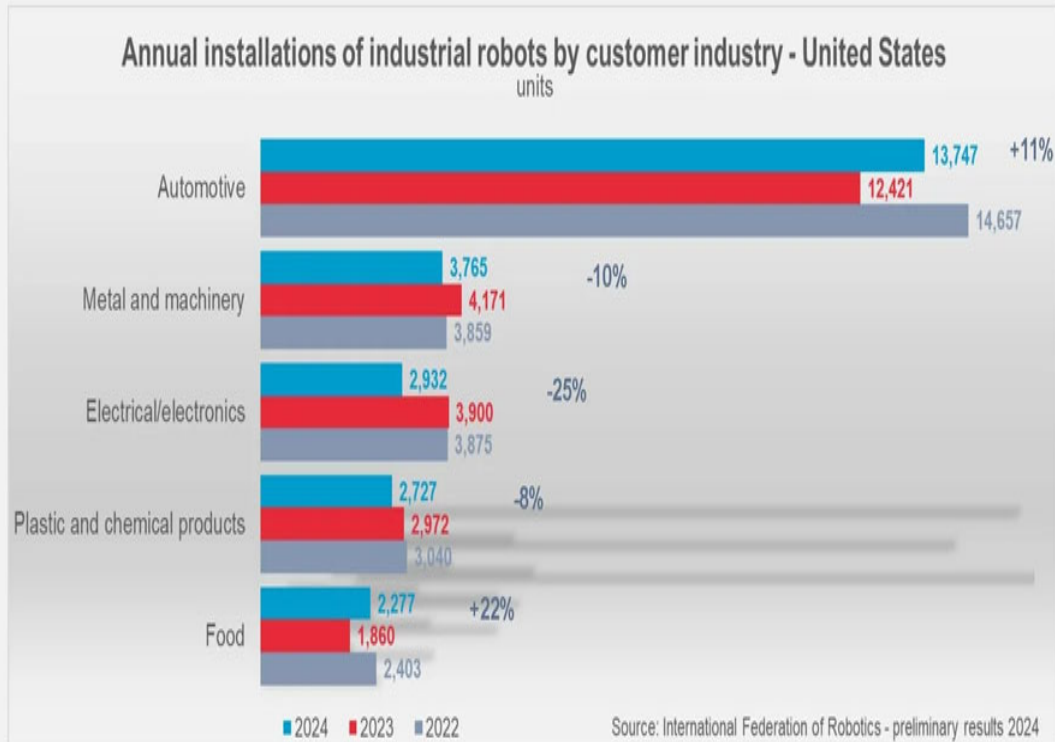


Photo courtesy of IFR

The International Federation of Robotics (IFR) last Thursday announced that automotive manufacturers in the United States last year increased industrial robot installations by 10.7% to reach 13,700 units in 2024. "The United States has one of the most automated car industries in the world: The ratio of robots to factory workers ranks fifth, tied with Japan and Germany and ahead of China," said IFR President Takayuki Ito. "This is a great achievement of modernization. However, in other key areas of manufacturing automation, the U.S. lags behind its competitors."

In China, the IFR explained in a release, "robotics and automation are penetrating all levels of production. This is evidenced by its high robot density of 470 robots per 10,000 employees in manufacturing — the third highest in the world, surpassing Germany and Japan in 2023. The United States, on the other hand, ranks only 10th among the world's most automated manufacturing countries with a robot density of 295 robots per 10,000 employees. The country's automation is heavily concentrated in the car sector: Around 40% of all new industrial robot installations in 2024 are in automotive."

Automotive industry is the pillar of US robot demand



Graph courtesy of IFR



Photo courtesy of the European Union

European Council President António Costa last week visited a Leonardo manufacturing site in Campi Bisenzio, just outside of Florence, Italy, calling the aerospace, cybersecurity and defense company a good example of “how a company that invests on innovation can deliver products and services that strengthen our common security.” Costa further emphasized that it was “also important for the policy makers to listen to the people on the ground. To listen to mayors, leaders of regions, but also to the companies to design our policy better.”

The Conway Projects Database ([subscribe here](#)) has tracked nine projects from Leonardo over the past eight years in Italy, the UK, Alabama, Arizona and Florida.

Conway Data, Inc. | 6625 The Corners Parkway, Suite 200, Peachtree Corners, GA 30092

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