New TVR will be built in Wales – and in further good news, the firm will be offering engineering apprenticeships…

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Author: Robin Roberts

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Report by Robin Roberts (for Miles Better News Agency).

Announced yesterday, Tuesday 22 March, TVR will build its new 155mph sports car in Wales. This means around 150 quality assembly and engineering jobs will be created in the £30 Million investment in the Ebbw Vale Industrial Zone over the next five years.

Advance orders for the unnamed new car exceed 350 which will take it to the end of its first year in production by 2018, and four new models are in the pipeline over ten years as it reaches a peak of 2,000 cars annually by 2022.

TVR has been steered towards the Ebbw Vale Industrial Zone because of plans for the forthcoming Circuit of Wales on adjacent land and the carmaker's desire to have a road-test facility for development and customer hand-overs.

But TVR has not yet decided precisely where in the zone it wants to have a factory and this is seen as a way of protecting its plans if the Circuit of Wales is not entirely finished in time.

The TVR deal with Welsh Government, which has unusually taken an equity or share stake in the venture, was agreed last Friday but the official announcement will be made this morning by First Minister Carwyn Jones.

The news today comes a month after Aston Martin said it will build its next global supercar at St Athan between Llantwit Major and Barry from 2019.

In 2017, TVR will celebrate 70 years of the marque, which was founded in Blackpool where it made their front engined and rear wheel drive cars until 2004 and its expected it will symbolically restart production in Wales after 12 years stoppage.

The new models will use Gordon Murray's i-stream revolutionary production system needing fewer assembly workers but is highly adaptable and less expensive than traditional methods. It will still, however, mean scores of jobs in assembly and secure more in the supply chain.

TVR says it has plans for a range of new models after the forthcoming 5.0V8 rear wheel drive car, including a possible hybrid or all-electric supercar gunning for Tesla.

The First Minister said this is a fantastic high profile investment by an iconic world-class brand which would carry the label Made in Wales.

TVR chairman Les Edgar said, ”South Wales is becoming a major hub for automotive and motorsport technology and is a serious opportunity for business development and job creation.”

TVR will be offering engineering apprenticeships when it starts building its new sports car in Wales.

The carmaker’s operations director John Chasey said they would start building cars in the last quarter of 2017 with delivery beginning in 2018, and they intended to create apprenticeships among the 150 local people they planned to employ.

TVR chairman Les Edgar paid tribute to the co-operation and enthusiasm of Welsh Government officials who had encouraged them to restart car production in Wales after a gap of 13 years since the Blackpool based business stopped the lines.

He said while TVR intended to operate in the Ebbw Vale Enterprise Zone it had not yet decided on a precise site but they will use it to bring in buyers to collect their models from the factory.

If the Circuit of Wales is up and running by 2018 the handover might include time on the track, but it’s not essential he said, adding, “We could use another circuit or may even build our own test track, we were keeping open our options.”

The chairman told media at the formal launch of the £30 Million investment that over 350 advance orders had been placed with deposits passing £1.75 Million.

The new car’s styling and manufacturing process has been refined by McLaren’s creative designer Gordon Murray and it is the first of four new cars in their lineup over the next ten years.