China deepens auto ties in Michigan

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At the international auto show in Detroit this week, a handful of Chinese companies showed off their wares. Chinese have invested billions in the US automotive industry, with most of it going to Michigan, reports Paul Welitzkin from the Motor City.  
The rising role of Chinese investment in the US auto industry, particularly in the state of Michigan, was on display last November when two organizations hosted events in the same week related to the industry that still defines the Wolverine state and its economy.  
In Dearborn, home of Ford Motor Co, the Detroit Chinese Business Association (DCBA) sponsored its US China Auto Export Forum, featuring auto industry executives, companies, entrepreneurs and government officials from Michigan and Canada.  
Across town in a northern Detroit suburb, the newly established Michigan US-China Exchange Center, hosted a delegation from the China Wuxi Die and Mould Trade Association at a gathering that included auto-related companies, executives and government officials. Cai Leiming, president of the association, signed a cooperation agreement between her organization and the exchange center to promote cross-border investment and trade.  
"The partnership with the Michigan-US China Exchange Center is important to us because American industry, particularly the auto industry, is somewhat mysterious to us. We would like to learn more and I think we can with this platform," said Cai.  
The Chinese have invested $3.15 billion in the state since 2003 with about 73 percent of that in auto-related companies and technology, according to Kevin Kerrigan, senior adviser for automotive initiatives for Michigan and the Michigan Economic Development Corp.  
The New York-based Rhodium Group said the Chinese have invested more than $4.3 billion in the US auto industry with about 75 percent of that in Michigan. California is second with about 8 percent.  
"We have been importing components from China for many years. If we have the opportunity to bring a Chinese company here that will create jobs in Michigan that is a good thing. The auto industry is truly global. We sell our products in China, so I think it's reasonable to expect China to sell products here," Kerrigan said.

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