



DRIVE*test*

DRIVEtest LLC

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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW AUTOMOTIVE JOINT VENTURE COMPANY CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING

LAREDO, Texas, Aug. 29, 2001 – DRIVEtest LLC, the new automotive joint venture company created to conduct durability testing in the U.S. for DaimlerChrysler Corp. (DCC) of Auburn Hills, Mich., officially celebrated its grand opening here today.

Officials from the two joint-venture partners – Smithers Scientific Services Inc. and Auto Testing Company Inc. (ATC), a subsidiary of Mercedes-Benz U.S. International Inc. – were on hand with other local dignitaries for remarks, tours of the facility and the formal ribbon-cutting.

The new company, located at the Auto Testing Properties LLC (ATP) Proving Ground in Laredo, was established to test the durability of power-train systems in Dodge and Chrysler cars and trucks.

“DRIVEtest will meet Chrysler’s stringent pre-production component testing requirements,” said Helmut Keller, chairman and CEO of DRIVEtest and ATC.

More than \$3.5 million was invested by ATP to enhance the proving ground as a result of the DRIVEtest contract with DaimlerChrysler. Improvements at the ATP proving ground include:

- Construction of a 65-ft.-high hill climb with a 20-percent grade on one side and a 30-percent grade on the other;

- Construction of a 14,000-sq.-ft. administrative building and garage;
- Installation of a 40-ft. splash trough to detect under-carriage corrosion; three stop/reverse lanes on the five-mile high-speed track; a fuel island; and additional parking and security enhancements.

DRIVE*test* will employ about 80 people to include engineers, technicians, mechanics, clerical staff and test drivers. It will operate eight-hour shifts 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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