

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Ohio's Newest Automotive Product, the Honda CR-V, Rolls Off the Line at Honda's East Liberty Plant**

**EAST LIBERTY, Ohio**, Sept. 26, 2006 – Honda production associates left their shift at the East Liberty Plant this morning having finished production of the first U.S.-made Honda CR-V, an all-new version of one of America's most popular sport utility vehicles.

Sixty units of the CR-V – all them in the color Nighthawk Black Pearl – rolled off the same East Liberty assembly line where Honda associates also build the Honda Civic Sedan and the Honda Element SUV.

"We're proud that our associates can build three distinctly different vehicles on a common assembly line with Honda's commitment to quality," said John Pleiman, plant manager and vice president of Honda of America Mfg. Inc. "Their dedication has been a key component of Honda's flexible manufacturing systems, which allow us to respond quickly to market changes."

Both shifts at East Liberty built the first batch of CR-Vs, which began to take shape in the body welding shop. They emerged from the paint shop on the first shift Monday and journeyed down the final assembly line. The first model was driven off the line at 7:17 p.m. Eastern time.

"Communication is the key part of making flexibility work on the line," said associate Paula Wilson of Bellefontaine, who has worked at Honda for 22 years and is one of the original associates at the East Liberty Plant, which opened in 1989.

Roy Preston of Springfield, an original East Liberty associate who has worked for Honda for 20 years, said: "This is the best start we've had of any of the new models. We were more prepared for it, since our plant has been flexible for so long."

Flexibility also is a key attribute of the nearby Marysville Auto Plant, where Honda builds the Accord Sedan, Accord Coupe, Acura TL luxury sports sedan and Acura RDX luxury sport utility vehicle.

Annual production volume of the CR-V at the East Liberty Plant will be determined by customer demand. Truly a global product, the CR-V for the North American market also is produced in the United Kingdom and Japan.

"There was a considerable amount of teamwork around the world in redesigning and manufacturing the CR-V. Here at East Liberty, our associates were empowered to suggest process changes that made this vehicle fit in with the Civic and Element," said Dave Skidmore, engineering project leader for the CR-V.

CR-Vs made at East Liberty come equipped with a 2.4-liter four-cylinder *i*-VTEC engine produced 40 miles away at Honda's Anna Engine Plant in western Ohio.

Between 2003 and 2006, Honda has invested about \$750 million to keep its Ohio operations as state-of-the art facilities. Honda's total U.S. capital investment in research and development, design, manufacturing and sales operations has risen to more than \$8.5 billion since 1979, when the company began U.S. manufacturing.

The East Liberty Plant inaugurated U.S. light truck production by Honda in Ohio when the Element went into production in November 2002.

The 2007 CR-V\* goes on sale Thursday. The new crossover vehicle has a dramatic new body structure. Under the aerodynamic look are safety enhancements, including Honda's exclusive Advanced Compatibility Engineering (ACE) body structure, six airbags, antilock brakes, pedestrian safety design and Vehicle Stability Assist with rollover sensor.

Honda of America Mfg. Inc. was established in 1979 to build motorcycles, adding car production in 1982. It's comprised of four manufacturing plants – the Marysville Auto Plant, the East Liberty Auto Plant, the Anna Engine Plant and the original facility, the Marysville Motorcycle Plant.

Honda employment in Ohio totals about 16,000. Major operations include Honda R&D Americas Inc. in Raymond; Honda Transmission Mfg. Inc. in Russells Point; Honda Engineering North America Inc. in Marysville and Anna; and the American Honda Motor Co. Inc. service parts and procurement center in Troy.

For more information visit [hondanews.com](http://hondanews.com).

\*using domestic and globally sourced parts

###