



The Ford Piquette Avenue Plant Birthplace of the Model T

You “Auto” Know Facts

The Ford Piquette Avenue Plant is the first factory-built and owned by the Ford Motor Company. It is one of the oldest car factories in America open to the public. The brick and timber structure was designed by a Detroit firm- Field, Hinchman & Smith. It opened for business in December of 1904.

1. The Ford Piquette Plant is recognized as one of the most significant historic automotive sites in the world since it is the birthplace of the Model T. Early automobile models B, C, F, K, N, R, and S were all built at the Piquette Plant.
2. The plant became the world’s largest manufacturer of automobiles, setting the world record for car production when workers produced 101 Model Ns, Rs, and Ss in ten hours in June of 1908.
3. The Model T debuted in 1908. Henry Ford, C. Harold Wills and Joseph Galamb sequestered themselves in a secret experimental room for nine months and designed the Model T, the first automobile built for the masses. It has been said that the course of history was changed as a consequence of what happened here. What started as evolutionary became revolutionary. Ordinary people could afford an automobile of their own. They could go anywhere they wanted at any time. The Model T created unprecedented mobility.
4. Many engineering innovations were introduced at the Plant. Harold Willis, the head engineer and metallurgist, introduced the use of Vanadium steel in the manufacturing of the frame. Spider Huff designed the flywheel magneto to use in the Model T engine to generate electricity. Also, the introduction of auto design, advertising, business practices, and sales techniques were introduced in the Plant.
5. While at Piquette, Mr. Ford and Mr. Couzens developed a nationwide dealer network.
6. Some of the first women to work in the auto industry fabricated magneto parts at the Piquette Plant. They were referred to as the “Magneto Girls.”
7. Demand for the Model T quickly outgrew the factory’s ability to produce them. In 1911, Ford Motor Company relocated to the Highland Park Plant and sold the Piquette factory to Studebaker, which operated here until 1933.



Ford Piquette Avenue Plant

www.fordpiquetteplant.org • (313) 872-8759 • 461 Piquette St., Detroit, MI 48202

How the Plant Was Saved:

After many decades, the old factory fell into disrepair and was slated for demolition. However, in the year 2000, a small group of dedicated citizens from the Henry Ford Heritage Association and community activists banded together to purchase the building.

Restoration of the plant is being done through volunteers. The Window Team, one of the volunteer groups, has rebuilt by hand more than 290 of the original 355 windows. The replacement glass was donated by Guardian Industries.

A National Historic Landmark

Today, the Piquette Plant is a museum and learning center. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2006. It is also a City, State and Federal Historic site. It has been registered as a National Heritage Site.

It is owned and operated by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Model-T Automotive Heritage Complex Inc. Staffed mostly by volunteers, the organization is dedicated to the preservation of the Ford Piquette Avenue Plant, the interpretation and celebration of Detroit's automotive heritage and the spirit of innovation.

The Ford Piquette Plant is part of the Motor Cities National Heritage Area. It is a member of the National Association of Auto Museums (NAAM). It is partnered with the Model T Ford Club International, Henry Ford Heritage Association, and the Woodward Avenue Action Association. It is not affiliated or funded by the Ford Motor Company.



Operations

Location: The Piquette Plant is located three blocks east of Woodward Avenue at 461 Piquette Street, Detroit, Michigan. The Plant is easily accessed by I-94 or I-75. The Amsterdam Station of the Q-Line is at the end of the street on Woodward Avenue.

Hours: The plant is open year round from Wednesday to Sunday from 10 am to 4 pm. It is closed January 1, Easter, July 4, Thanksgiving Day, and December 24 and 25.

Guided Tours: Our tours leave at 10 am 12 pm and 2 pm. Group tour packages are available. Parking is free. The building and restrooms are handicap accessible.

Rentals: The plant may be rented for special events.

Media Contact: Nancy Darga, Executive Director at 313-872-8759 or at Piquetteplant@gmail.com

Group Tours: Please see our website for most up-to-date pricing information. Reservations required.