

AstraZeneca opens research center

Prince Charles praised Cambridge as a center of scientific collaboration as the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca opened a 1 billion-pound (\$1.34 billion) research center, hoping to build on work in developing one of the first COVID-19 vaccines. The 19,000 square-meter (more than 200,000 square-foot) complex near the University of Cambridge will house more than 2,200 research scientists. It joins a cluster of businesses seeking to make Cambridge a hub for life sciences research similar to what California's Silicon Valley is

for the technology industry. "Having myself studied at Cambridge ... over 50 years ago now, one of the things which I have always found so special about this city is how it attracts the meeting of minds, sparks unique cross-disciplinary conversations and nurtures collaboration and ingenuity," Charles said at the official opening. The Cambridge life sciences cluster includes 631 companies that employ almost 21,000 people and generate annual revenue of 7 billion pounds, according to Cambridge Ahead, which promotes business development in the city.

AstraZeneca worked with Oxford University to develop one of the first COVID-19 vaccines approved by regulators in the UK, European Union and other countries. The vaccine is widely used in dozens of developing nations because AstraZeneca has pledged to keep costs down by selling it to low- and middle-income countries on a non-profit basis. AstraZeneca also plans to ask the US Food and Drug Administration to approve the vaccine. (AP)

T-Mobile to pay \$20m in settlement

Wireless carrier T-Mobile agreed to pay \$19.5 million in a settlement with the Federal Communications Commission over a 12-hour nationwide outage in June 2020 that resulted in thousands of failed 911 calls. The FCC said that as part of the settlement, T-Mobile will also commit to improving communications of outages to emergency call centers, among other measures. The agency said there was a "complete failure" of more than

23,000 911 calls because of the outage. There were also calls that did go through but without key information, like a callback number or location data. The FCC's investigation said the outage began because of a failure in part of T-Mobile's network, which was made worse by routing and software errors. The Bellevue, Washington, company did not immediately respond to a request for comment. (AP)

Co aims to make more powerful battery

Nissan investing \$17.6b in electric vehicles: CEO

TOKYO, Nov 29, (AP): Nissan said Monday it is investing 2 trillion yen (\$17.6 billion) over the next five years and developing a cheaper, more powerful battery to boost its electric vehicle lineup.

The Japanese automaker's chief executive, Makoto Uchida, said 15 new electric vehicles will be available by fiscal 2030. Nissan Motor Co. is aiming for a 50% "electrification" of the company's model lineup, under what Uchida called the "Nissan Ambition 2030" long-term plan. Electrified vehicles include hybrids and other kinds of environmentally friendly models other than just electric vehicles.

The effort is focused mainly on electric vehicles to cut emissions and meet various customers' needs, said Uchida. Nissan also will reduce carbon emissions at its factories, he added.

The company has been struggling to put the scandal of its former Chairman Carlos Ghosn behind it. Ghosn, who led Nissan for two decades, after he was sent to Japan by French alliance partner Renault, was arrested in Tokyo in 2018 on various financial misconduct charges.

Uchida made no mention of the scandal but referred to "past mistakes" he promised won't be repeated at Nissan.

Nissan's "electrification" rests on developing a new ASSB, or all solid state battery, that it categor-

ized as "a breakthrough" for being cheaper and generating more power than batteries now in use.

That means electric powertrains can be more easily used in trucks, vans and other heavier vehicles because the batteries can be smaller. The ASSB will be in mass production by 2028, according to Nissan.

The costs of electric vehicles will also fall thanks to the battery innovation to levels comparable with regular gasoline cars, Uchida said.

"Nissan has emerged from a crisis and is ready to make a new start," he said.

All top automakers, including Nissan's Japanese rival Toyota Motor Corp., are working on electric vehicles, amid growing concern over climate change and sustainability. Global consumers are also demanding more safety features.

Uchida said Nissan was hiring 3,000 engineers to strengthen its research, including digital technology for vehicles.

Nissan, based in Yokohama, Japan, has suffered recently from the computer chips shortage that's slammed all automakers because of lockdowns and other measures at chip factories to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

The maker of the Infiniti luxury models, Leaf electric vehicle and Z sportscar is projecting a return to profitability for the fiscal year through March 2022 after racking up two straight years of losses.

US shippers prepare for another pandemic crush of holiday gifts

Nearly 3.4 billion parcels expected to crisscross the country



A worker carries a large parcel at the United States Postal Service sorting and processing facility, Thursday, Nov. 18, 2021, in Boston. Last year's holiday season was far from the most wonderful time of the year for the beleaguered U.S. Postal Service. Shippers are now gearing up for another holiday crush. (AP)

PORTLAND, Maine, Nov 29, (AP): The last holiday season was far from the most wonderful time of the year for the U.S. Postal Service: Sick and quarantined workers, a flood of packages from shoppers loath to set foot in stores and a last-minute dump of packages from overwhelmed private shippers.

Postal workers who recall packages and letters piled up in distribution hubs are better prepared this time as they gear up for another pandemic crunch. But low product inventories, and port and supply chain disruptions are creating new uncertainty about getting gifts delivered.

Already, workers are seeing a surge in holiday packages that began several weeks ago.

"A lot of the workers are saying, 'Oh no. Here we go again,'" said Scott Adams, local president of the American Postal Workers Union in Portland.

The U.S. Postal Service and private shippers UPS and FedEx are bolstering their hiring - bringing in about 230,000 temporary workers - and taking other steps to ensure they don't become overwhelmed by packages.

Nearly 3.4 billion parcels are expected to crisscross the country this holiday season, representing an estimated increase of about 400 million compared to last year, said Satish Jindel, from Pennsylvania-based ShipMatrix, which analyzes shipping package data.

When cards and letters are included, the U.S. Postal Service said it'll be delivering more than 12 billion items.

"The pandemic is still here. The supply chain is a challenge that's going to impact how people shop and how products move," said Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, which represents more than 200,000 postal workers.

Despite the precarious situation, the Postal Service, UPS and FedEx are in better shape to handle the peak volume, and several trends could work in their favor, Jindel said.

More people are shopping in stores compared to last year, and people have been placing online orders earlier because they're keenly aware of supply chain problems, Jindel said. Also, with workers returning to offices, there are fewer office supply shipments being made to homes, he said.

Most importantly, the shippers are adapting after their rough-and-tumble experience last year, he said.

U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, who faced withering criticism last year but reported on-time improvements and reduced operating losses this month, says the service is ready for the crunch.

"We are ready, so send us your packages and your mail," he said.

A year ago, more than a third of Postal Service first-class mail was late by the time Christmas arrived.

Tractor-trailers stuffed with mail were left idling outside some postal-sorting facilities. Packages and letters piled up in distribution hubs. Delays grew by days, and then weeks, in many instances.

Two things were painfully obvious. More workers and more space were needed - and both are being addressed.

To get a handle of the volume, the Postal Service is transitioning more than 30,000 non-career employees to the ranks of career employees by peak season, hiring 40,000 seasonal employees, and leasing extra space at more than 100 locations to ensure there's room for parcels.

The Postal Service installed more than 100 new package sorting machines as of early November, part of \$40 billion of planned investment over 10 years. Also, more than 50 package systems capable of sorting large packages are expected to be deployed before December. Combined, these expand capacity by an additional 4.5 million packages per day, officials said.

UPS, for its part, is hiring more than 100,000 seasonal employees across the country and continues to add aircraft and automation. It expects nearly 90% of its packages to flow through automated facilities by year's end.

FedEx, meanwhile, is in the process of boosting its nationwide workforce by 90,000 across its operating companies. Most of those new workers are expected to remain after the holidays, the company said.

Despite all those extra workers, the shippers agree that this is not the year for shoppers to procrastinate.

"Complete your holiday shopping as soon as possible," said Jim Mayer, spokesperson for UPS.

New features include ESG capabilities, Advanced Analytics and innovative user experience

Latest Update to IFS Cloud Adds New Functionality And Simplifies Composable Application Deployment



Christian Pedersen

IFS, the global cloud enterprise applications company, today announced the latest update to IFS Cloud™, which is now generally available. IFS's twice annual release cycle allows customers to constantly evolve their solution without the need for big upgrades or migrations, clearing their road to focus on business transformation.

The latest evolution of IFS Cloud delivers a long range of innovative, industry-specific new capabilities. For one, IFS is helping businesses collect the data needed to demonstrate their compliance and improve their performance against environmental sustainability standards - IFS Cloud Sustainability Hub is now available and integrated inside Microsoft Teams. Secondly, IFS Cloud for HCM and Talent Management solutions now provide the flexibility of using either basic or out of the box functionality for recruitment, onboarding, and development of your most key resource - your people.

Available now are new APIs that connect factory machinery with IFS Cloud to deliver a connected shopfloor - this provides real-time intelligence that enables companies to better manage their supply-chain and production in line with order demands. New Intelligent Asset Monitoring and Maintenance functionality uses machine learning to improve predictive maintenance capabilities and efficiency.

The new Advanced Analytics feature that is accessible through the user-customizable Lobbies leverages modular tabular analysis models to clearly display business-critical information relevant to the user. End users can visualize their data in real, detailed graphical renderings suitable to the way they access and consume data, reducing the skills needed to make insights available to everyone.

As a market differentiator and ongoing driver for the evolution of IFS Cloud, the platform's UX has also been updated. New branding capabilities allow the customer to integrate their own look & feel, helping to create a more engaging experience for users. Adding customization and analytical capabilities enables users to join up data, insights, actions and transactions in one place.

Additional capabilities added to IFS Cloud include

- The Update Studio puts customers in control of the update and cadence of functionality, allowing them to analyze the release update and understand what impact it might have on configuration or customization, before making any changes, which is especially critical to customers in regulated industries. The Update Studio is at the heart of enabling our customers to stay evergreen.
- The Dispatch Console, which is part of IFS Cloud for Service Management, now features capabilities based on four personas of dispatchers, ranging from those that rely on a mostly automated process to those that will complete a whole process start to finish manually. IFS Cloud now gives each user profile the power to make sure they are delivering their Moment of Service™ for their customers.

IFS Chief Product Officer Christian Pedersen commented, "The updates we have built into the latest release of IFS Cloud are meaningful for our customers, both in how customers engage with the software through the UX improvements, as well as the additional functionality that has been added to help them manage and address the issues they face and the opportunities ahead of them. An example of this is the new IFS Cloud Sustainability Hub - there is no customer who does not want to improve the impact they are having on the environment and communities we all work in. Sustainability is a critical item for not only our planet, but IFS and our customers. We are continuing to see the world over that businesses want and need to transform if they are to prosper. Therefore, having regular, meaningful updates to our platform is key to enabling customers to remain evergreen and empowered to continually drive value from their software."

IFS is committed to delivering an ever-evolving set of solutions for customers along their transformation life-cycles - future-proofing their operations, limiting risk to their businesses, and allowing them to create increasing value to their own customers.

"We've been expanding our digital transformation globally with IFS's help, and since we initiated IFS Cloud six months ago, it's proving to be key in how we deliver on our ambitions," said pioneer IFS customer Cimcorp's Director of Corporate IT, Pekka Nurmi. "IFS Cloud provides a big step forward in technology and capability for us and our customers and will continue to support our global growth strategy. The biggest value provided by IFS Cloud is the ease of use for the everyday end user - our users are excited and also our management has shown particular interest in the new user interface and functionalities."

To find out more about the latest IFS Cloud release, visit: <https://www.ifs.com/ifs-cloud/cloud-21r2/>

Vehicles selling quicker than ever

Low inventory means high car prices on Black Friday

By Ronald Montoya Edmunds

This has been a tough year to buy a new or used car in America. With COVID-19 factory shutdowns, semiconductor chip shortages, rising prices and supply chain issues, it's been nothing but bad news for car shoppers. And for those who've waited, hoping Black Friday sales would bring some reprieve from high prices, we're afraid that there aren't many bargains to speak of.

In ordinary times, Black Friday would be a busy yet fruitful time to shop for a new car because dealerships are motivated to discount outgoing models to make room for the newest model year. However, Edmunds data shows that overall new car inventory levels are down 77% compared to 2019, when the market was more typical.

"The microchip shortage has forced inventory far below demand and vehicles are selling quicker than ever before," said Jessica Caldwell, Edmunds' executive director of insights. "In fact, many dealers are selling vehicles that haven't even arrived on their lots yet."

Vehicles that are left tend to be in a more expensive trim or are saddled with dealer-added accessories that further boost the vehicle's cost. Couple that with the buying public's continuing shift from sedans to higher-priced SUVs and trucks, and it should come as no surprise that the average new car transaction price hit a record high of \$45,598 in October, according to Edmunds data.

Not only will buyers have to contend with fewer cars, but they are also not as likely to get much of a discount. In fact, 39% of shoppers in October paid over the manufacturer's suggested retail price, while 35% of shoppers were given a discount of less than \$500, according to Edmunds.

We do have some good news, though. Edmunds has combed through the latest transaction data to find five new vehicles with relatively high discounts and above-average inventory to make your search easier. We've organized them in order of percentage off the MSRP. Keep in mind that exact inventory figures are difficult to pinpoint these days, so you may not find all these vehicles at your local dealership.

Small luxury suv: 2021 Volvo XC60
Average MSRP: \$56,286; average transaction price: \$52,886; average discount: \$3,401 (-6%)

What Edmunds' editors say about the XC60: "If you're looking for a well-rounded luxury SUV, the Volvo XC60 should be one of the first to check out. It's available with a variety of powertrains to suit your power or fuel efficiency needs, it's spacious enough for adults and their luggage, and it's got all the standard and optional equipment you'd expect in an

upscale vehicle. Unfortunately for the Volvo, it isn't the sportiest SUV in its segment, nor is it the quietest."

Small suv: 2021 Jeep Compass
Average MSRP: \$30,822; average transaction price: \$29,057; average discount: \$1,765 (-5.7%)

What Edmunds' editors say about the Compass: "For enthusiasts who like getting dirty, exploring the less worn path is a genuinely enjoyable thing to do. They will happily tolerate the Trailhawk's on-road sluggishness in exchange for its surprising capability off-road. While most crossovers will reside in suburbia, Jeep infused the Compass with the right look and feel to keep drivers smiling."

Small luxury suv: 2021 Lincoln Corsair

Average MSRP: \$45,157; average transaction price: \$44,082; average discount: \$1,075 (-2.4%)

What Edmunds' editors say about the Corsair: "The Corsair replaces the unloved MKC, and its swath of improvements makes it easy to see why Lincoln abandoned the name. The Corsair is much more competitive against rivals than the MKC ever was, but some aspects don't live up to luxury-class standards."

Extra-small luxury suv: 2021 Buick Encore GX

Average MSRP: \$29,802; average transaction price: \$29,808; average discount: \$704 (-2.4%)

What Edmunds' editors say about the Encore GX: "The Encore GX is at the larger and more luxurious end of the extra-small SUV segment. It comes with a wealth of available technology and safety features as well as a more upscale interior than most other rival SUVs. Its larger-than-average size provides benefits in interior and cargo space. That said, you do pay a price for these qualities since the Encore GX is expensive relative to its primary competition."

Extra-small luxury suv: 2021 BMW X1

Average MSRP: \$41,492; average transaction price: \$40,736; average discount: \$755 (-1.8%)

What Edmunds' editors say about the X1: "The X1 is a quintessential BMW SUV just in a smaller package. It provides excellent cargo space and passenger accommodations along with a fun-to-drive demeanor. But if you value a cushier ride, a more fashionable interior or cutting-edge tech, you'll likely want to consider other strong options in this class."

EDMUNDS says: If you need to get into a new vehicle this year and see one you like, it's best to take the plunge and make the purchase sooner rather than later. Otherwise, you might end up empty-handed because plenty of other shoppers will likely be jockeying for the same vehicle.