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## IMS Autrans key Nissan middleman

- Company called the "nucleus" in Canton's autoplant's supply line

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IMS Autrans is only three minutes away from the loading dock at Nissan's Canton plant.

The location of the automotive logistics service provider is a critical link in the Nissan supply chain, said Bob Landis, general manager of IMS Autrans and vice president of Autrans Corp. in Smyrna, Tenn.

"This is the nucleus. This drives the train," Landis said.

The company serves as the point of entry for more than 3,000 parts from 14 suppliers. IMS Autrans warehouses and distributes the parts from those suppliers to the \$1.4 billion Nissan facility.

Nissan owns the 300,000-square-foot facility that IMS Autrans manages. Autrans Corp. has coordinated supplies and shipping to Nissan's Smyrna facility since 1988, Landis said.

Nissan was vital in forming the partnership between Autrans and Integrated Management Services, a Jackson-based engineering and operations firm, said John Calhoun, CEO of the two companies.

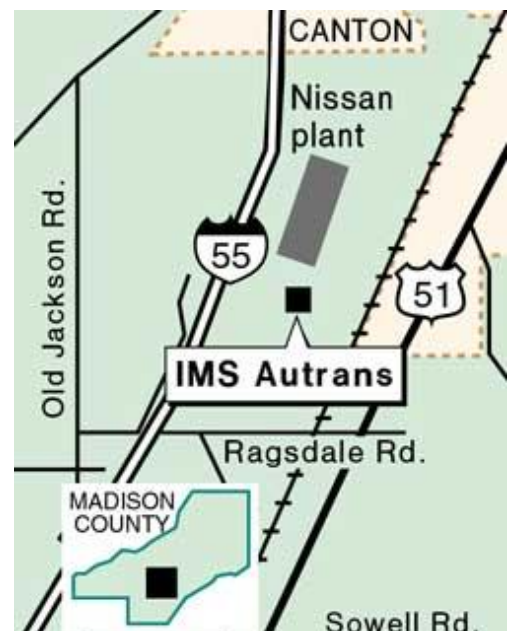
Nissan wanted some of its established suppliers, such as Autrans, to partner with minority-owned companies in Mississippi to first help then become suppliers for the assembly plant.

IMS Autrans, just 1.3 miles from Nissan, receives parts from around the country, sorts and stores the parts, and delivers them to Nissan as part of the company's "just-in-time delivery system," said Dave Boyer, vice president of manufacturing for Nissan in Canton.



Barbara Gauntt/The Clarion-Ledger

In the IMS Autrans warehouse, Seraiah Branson (right) of Canton and T.J. Calhoun of Jackson repackage parts from Mexico to go to Nissan.





## **IMS Autrans key Nissan middleman** (continued)

IMS Autrans also performs some assembly, like adding clips and moulding to automotive glass, and cutting to Nissan specifications head liners for the Nissan Quest minivans, which the Canton plant is producing 350 of daily.

Calhoun said his company was chosen to work with Nissan because he had the courage to contact the automaker when state officials announced Nissan had chosen Canton. Calhoun said he wrote to Emil Hassan, senior vice president of Nissan's North American operations and the company's purchasing department.

"We got a call one day inviting us to a meeting with Mr. Hassan in Smyrna," Calhoun said.

"At that meeting in Smyrna, Mr. Hassan explained to us his vision for Nissan North America in Canton, and also for a supplier logistics center. We talked openly about management style and management philosophy and the Nissan way of doing business."

IMS Autrans operates on the same schedule as Nissan. The company keeps a minimum of three days of supplies at the structure, part of which is temperature controlled.

Performance at the center is maximized because Nissan evaluates certain aspects of its operation, like cost efficiency to the suppliers who are located there, on at least a quarterly basis.

IMS Autrans opened in February and employs 158, and expects to have up to 250 when it's at full staffing levels.

The company also provides labor and supervisory staff for its major tenants. Those include Carlex Glass Co., which provides glass for the Pathfinder Armada SUV, the Titan pickup and the Infiniti SUV which will be named at a later date; AP Technoglass, which supplies glass for the Quest minivan; and Yazaki North America, which provides wire harnesses.