

# General Motors interested in building track at YPG to test vehicles

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A proposal to build a civilian hot-weather vehicle test track at Yuma Proving Ground will be presented to the Yuma County Board of Supervisors at its May 7 meeting, said Chris Camacho, head of Greater Yuma Economic Development Corp.

When asked by The Sun, Camacho confirmed that General Motors is interested in building the track, which it would use for testing civilian vehicles under the security of the military facility. The track would benefit YPG because it could also use it for testing military vehicles and would receive revenue from leasing the ground.

Camacho said it's not a deal yet, as other areas are also being considered. But the support of the state agency is definitely encouraging for efforts to bring it to YPG.

"We are doing everything we can to bring this company here," Camacho said.

GM spokeswoman Janine Fruehan said in a phone call from her Detroit office that the automaker has not reached a final decision as to where it will relocate its hot-weather vehicle test track, which is currently in Mesa.

Chuck Wullenjohn, a spokesman for YPG, confirmed that no agreement has been reached as of yet between the base and the automaker.

"It's not finalized at this time but the reports are favorable," Wullenjohn said. "We just want to make sure it is a good deal for YPG and the taxpayer."

Camacho said the project has been approved for a funding package by the Arizona Commerce and Economic Development Commission, which requires a local partial match.

The supervisors will be asked for a financial commitment, said Camacho, who has been working at attracting the project for some time.

Camacho, who is giving a broad overview of the project to supervisors that Monday, added that the project could have an economic benefit of hundreds of millions of dollars to the community.

"It could be a real shot in the arm," Wullenjohn agreed. "It would involve many well-paying jobs."

According to previous articles in The Sun about the hot-weather vehicle test track, its cost is reportedly

between \$60 million and \$80 million.

The project would consist of a paved track and a track with a crushed rock surface, each of which would be 4.5 miles.

The proposed site, according to previous articles, consists of approximately 2,400 acres and is to be fenced by the developer to ensure the security requirements of both the industry and government are met.

Previous articles stated that one reason for the test track is that YPG is in need of a new one for its military transport and wheeled combat vehicles that routinely operate in Iraq and elsewhere under high weight, high temperatures and higher speeds.