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Cheap carbon fiber? BMW shoots to reduce its cost

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Carbon fiber as cheap as everyday plastic?

Could happen, especially now that BMW is participating in building a carbon fiber plant and is vowing to bring down costs as it gears up for electric-car production. BMW is participating in a joint project with SGL Automotive Carbon Fibers and plans to build a plant in Moses Lake, Wash.



CAPTION

By BMW

Carbon fiber has been around for years, including in the roof of that 2006 BMW M6 in the photo above, but high costs for the tough-but-light material have restricted its use. It either shows up in touches on mainstream cars, or extensively in luxury or performance cars.

The plant is being built as BMW gears up to make its "Megacity" vehicle, a car that will get high mileage from electric power and its light weight, which comes from carbon fiber.

Carbon fiber prices will come down, predicts BMW Chief Financial Officer Friedrich Eichiner in an interview with Drive On after attending the ceremony in Washington state. (That's him in the photo with Washington's governor.) The goal is to be able to make a carbon fiber body at about the same cost as aluminum. "We really want to make a step into volume," he said.



CAPTION

By Elaine Thompson, AP

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