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## FORD

# Demand soars for Ford's electric F-150 Lightning: 100,000 pre-orders placed

**Phoebe Wall Howard** Detroit Free Press

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Ford Motor Co. hit another milestone with its all-electric 2022 Ford F-150 Lightning.

The company has confirmed reaching 100,000 reservations since the Lightning's global debut three weeks ago at world headquarters in Dearborn.

"We're super excited about the demand," Emma Bergg, Ford spokeswoman, told the Free Press on Thursday. "Reservations are getting added all the time."

The official order bank opens later this year, she said.

The automaker accepts \$100 refundable reservations to place an order for the 2022 pickup truck that will be built in a new \$700 million plant at the Rouge Complex in Dearborn.

Making online refundable reservation orders is part of a new protocol for carmakers. Ford did the same with its all-electric Mustang Mach-E.

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Meanwhile, Ford is touting its ability to recruit top talent to develop the latest digital technology as the company increases its all-electric and hybrid vehicle options.

Ford CEO Jim Farley has said the company will use data and software expertise on a scale the industry hasn't seen. This is a key part of a strategy to offer digital services and subscription revenue that changes car sales from a one-time transaction.

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Industry analysts and the media have wondered whether the Ford team can find the talent it needs to lead a high-tech era.

## Recruiting from Google

"At its core, at Ford we're solving big challenges, right? Tremendous challenges. We're sitting at a point the industry that's transforming and a company that's transforming. We find that getting the software talent into Ford with that kind of a challenge is actually an easy proposition," Alex Purdy, director of business operations, enterprise connectivity, told reporters during a call on Capital Markets Day on May 26.

"I was trying to recruit somebody from Google just last week and they're coming from a business that encourages consumers to click on ads. We're coming from a business that is going to bring mobility to a whole new generation," he said.

"I think it's because of the challenge that we have success and we've had some really good luck getting the talent. But there's a lot more in front of us," Purdy said. "We have over 6,000 software engineers today at Ford and, of those, 600 of them have joined us really in 2021. We still have a lot more to go. But we think that the challenge, and the path we just laid out in terms of a strategy, is a compelling reason for talent to come and join us."

Consumers have moved from enhancing technology at home to asking for more technology in their vehicles. That means carmakers need software engineering talent.

Silicon Valley companies have taken great pride in the quality of their software engineers, including all-electric carmaker Tesla.

Will those brilliant minds so in demand in California work for a legacy automaker?

"What we're learning as we go through this process ... it's not the talent outside Ford coming to Ford is a challenge, actually," Farley told reporters after his May 26 presentation to Wall Street analysts. "The challenge is reorienting Ford to think about software experiences before we think about anything else. That's the change. That's the really big opportunity for us ... throughout the organization."

## A surge in software engineers

The automaker had more than 7,000 software engineers in the U.S. and Canada working on design, architecture, data, testing and other technical and infrastructure roles as of Thursday,

said Marisa Bradley, Ford spokeswoman.

Farley, who took the helm as CEO on Oct. 1, began the push to hire software engineers in a previous role at the company leading technology. Former CEO Jim Hackett announced in April 2019 an enhanced focus on new business, technology and big data.

"We have hired 600 software engineers this year alone, so that is certainly more than we have in one year before," Bradley said. "The push started before Jim Farley became CEO, but he was in the new business role, so he certainly was a catalyst."

Ford sells about 1 million Ford F-Series pickups each year.

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*Contact Phoebe Wall Howard at [phoward@freepress.com](mailto:phoward@freepress.com) or call/text 313-618-1034. Follow her on Twitter @phoebesaid. Read more on [Ford](#) and sign up for our [autos newsletter](#).*