

《重回“大工厂”时代：特斯拉超级工厂亮相》

导读:该工厂现在只建好了14%左右，但当全部完工时，将占地约1000万平方英尺，差不多是262个国家橄榄球联盟球场的大小。



SPARKS, Nev. (AP) -- It's Tesla Motors' biggest bet yet: a massive, \$5 billion factory in the Nevada desert that could nearly double the world's production of lithium-ion batteries.

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Tesla officially opened its Gigafactory on Tuesday, a little more than two years after construction began. The factory is about 14 percent complete but when it's finished, it will be about 10 million square feet, or about the size of 262 NFL football fields. That will make it one of the largest buildings in the world.

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The factory is key to the future of Palo Alto, California-based Tesla. The 13-year-old electric car company, which has never made a full-year profit, wants to transition from a niche maker of luxury vehicles to a full-line maker of affordable cars, pickups and even semi-trucks. It also runs Tesla Powerwall, a solar energy storage business for homes and businesses.

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The company says making its own lithium-ion batteries at the scale the Gigafactory will allow will reduce its battery costs by more than a third.

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Most immediately, Tesla needs the batteries for its fourth car, the Model 3 sedan, which is scheduled to go on sale at the end of next year. At a starting price of around \$35,000, the Model 3 will be Tesla's least expensive vehicle, partly because of battery cost reductions.

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Tesla unveiled the Model 3 at the end of March. Within a week, more than 325,000 people had put down a \$1,000 deposit to reserve the car. After seeing that level of demand, Tesla moved its production plans forward. The company now says it will make 500,000 vehicles per year by 2018, two years earlier than scheduled.

[illegible]

To meet that goal, Gigafactory construction is proceeding at a furious pace. Inside the factory, Tesla's partner, Panasonic Corp., is installing machines in sealed, humidity-controlled rooms that will start making battery cells before the end of this year.

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Panasonic is also shipping cells from Japan to the Powerwall business, which is operating in another section of the factory. Robots are used to place battery packs into home and office units, which store energy from solar panels and allow users to tap it during peak periods.

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Outside, nearly 1,000 workers are laying the groundwork for the factory's expansion, digging trenches and erecting steel supports in the hot, dusty valley. By the second quarter of 2017, 31 percent of the factory will be completed.

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The factory's name stems from "giga," a unit of measurement that represents billions. One gigawatt hour is the equivalent of generating one billion watts for one hour — one million times that of one kilowatt hour.

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