

It's a Studebaker! Well, it's also a Kaiser, Nash, Hudson, Rambler, Willys, AMC...



The MV-1 Para-mobility van is built by AM General in Mishawaka Indiana. AM General is headquartered in South Bend.



AM General traces its roots to the Standard Wheel Company of Terra Haute, Indiana, which expanded in 1903 to include the Overland Automotive Division.

In 1908, John North Willys purchased the Overland company, then based in Indianapolis and renamed it Willys-Overland Motors, Inc.

In the 1940s, Willys-Overland developed the Jeep of WWII fame.

In 1953, Kaiser Motors purchased Willys-Overland, and changed the name to Kaiser-Willys Motor Company.

In 1963 the company's name changed again to Kaiser Jeep Corporation.

In 1964, after Studebaker closed its U.S. auto manufacturing operations, Kaiser Jeep purchased the Studebaker facilities in South Bend and acquired the "General Products Division" of Studebaker, along with its substantial defense contracts. At the time, Kaiser had been awarded an \$87 million Army truck contract. Under government pressure Kaiser Jeep agreed to perform the work at the South Bend plant.

In 1967 Kaiser-Jeep formed the Defense and Government Products Division.

American Motors Corporation (AMC) purchased the Jeep Corporation from Kaiser in 1970 when Kaiser decided to leave the auto business.

In 1971, AMC made the General Products Division of Jeep (producing military trucks, as well as contract and non-commercial vehicles) a wholly owned subsidiary and renamed it AM General Corporation.

AM General produced buses (1974-1979), large trucks, and Jeeps for industrial, military, and government use.

In the late-1970s, AM General developed the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV), nicknamed "Humvee", for military use as a heavy-duty replacement for the jeep. The vehicle later became available in a civilian version sold under the Hummer brand name.

American Motors ended its history as an independent automaker in 1982 when controlling interest in the company was purchased by France's Renault. U.S. government regulations at that time forbade ownership of defense contractors by foreign governments, and Renault was partially owned by the French government.

Therefore, in 1983, AM General was sold by AMC to the LTV Corporation and it became a wholly owned subsidiary of the LTV Aerospace and Defense Company. As a result, AM General remained an independent company after AMC was purchased by Chrysler Corporation.

AM General, which remains an independent company and government and military contractor, sold the rights to the Hummer brand to General Motors in 1999. It continued production of the original civilian Hummer (dubbed by GM as the H1) until June 2006 when it ceased production.

AM General built a separate factory to build a new Hummer H2, designed by and marketed by General Motors. The vehicle went on the market in 2002, and was produced under contract to GM until January 2009. AM General did not build the Hummer H3, and the firm is not part of General Motors Corporation.

In 2008, AM General and the Vehicle Production Group (VPG), of Troy, Michigan, announced that contracts had been signed for AM General to begin producing purpose-built taxi-cabs, beginning in 2009. Through market feedback, VPG developed a more advanced and user-friendly vehicle known as the MV-1 to replace the Standard Taxi, which never entered series production. The MV-1 was the first production-made

purpose-built vehicle in North America constructed from the ground up for people with disabilities. Actual production began in October 2011.

In September 2013, after the demise of VPG, AM General reached an agreement to purchase the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) secured loan to VPG. As a result of this transaction, AM General created a wholly owned company, Mobility Ventures LLC, to operate the Mobility Vehicle-1 (MV-1) business and receive all VPG assets.

The MV-1 has a simple but sturdy body-on-frame construction with fully boxed rails. The 2016 model is powered by a Ford 3.7-liter V6. Prices range from about \$45,000 for a base model to \$65,000 for the luxury "LX".

So when you see a new MV-1 "Para-Mobility" Van running around The Valley, there's a good bet that some of the sons and daughters of former Studebaker assembly line workers put it together!

More information on the MV-1 can be found on the companies web site:

<http://www.mv-1.us/mobility-ventures-unveils-the-mv-1-lx>

**Which one would you drive?**



