

# Big boys...

The 2002 Explorer, the next generation of the best-selling sport utility vehicle in the world, have began leaving the assembly plant and are headed for Ford dealerships.

More than 75,000 dealer orders have been placed already for the all-new Explorer, which features major improvements in interior space, suspension and safety. The vehicles will be appearing in dealer showrooms over the next few weeks and can be sold upon receipt.

"The new Explorer is a wonderful example of the best getting even better," said Jim O'Connor, Ford Division president. "Last year the Explorer set an all-time sales record, and we believe that the all-new vehicle will help us to maintain our leadership and strengthen our lineup."

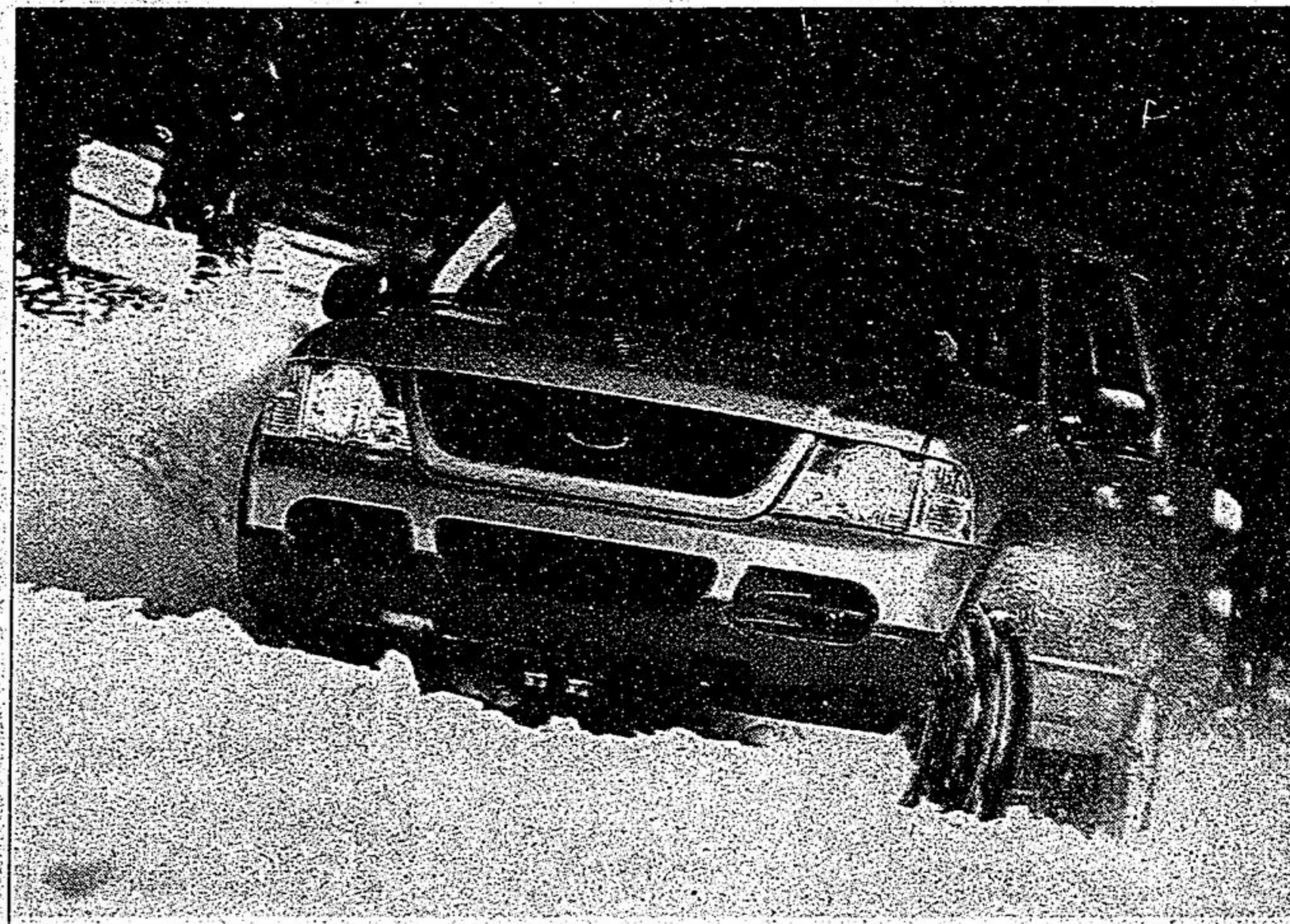
In order to ensure extremely high quality, the rollout of the new Explorer included extraordinary rigorous testing resulting in a number of best practices that will be cascaded to other facilities.

Ford took a strategic approach to this important launch in order to ensure quality and to sustain customer enthusiasm and anticipation for the newest best-selling SUV.

"Our strategic approach for this launch has been unprecedented, including a slower production ramp up, CEO-level supplier involvement and extensive field evaluation by senior management and top Explorer dealers," said Gurminder Bedi, vice president North American Truck. "This approach gives us great confidence in the excellent quality of the very first 2002 Explorers arriving in dealerships."

Featuring a new independent rear suspension (IRS) system and unique porthole-in-frame design, allowing for a lower step-in height as well as a third-row seat, Explorer is designed to offer an improved ride in a more comfortable and user friendly interior.

Ford Explorer also offers customers many standard and optional features



that make it stand out from the competition, including: 2.5-inch wider stance and 2-inch-longer wheel base than current model, optional adjustable pedals and improved ControlTrac four-wheel-drive system. Also available later in 2001, are new safety features: the Personal Safety System, which includes driver and passenger dual-stage air bags; and the Safety Canopy, an industry-first system with rollover sensors deploying side-curtain air bags to protect passengers in the event of a rollover.

The volume model, an

XLT 4x4 equipped with the standard 4.0-liter V-6 engine and optional premium electronic AM/FM stereo/clock/single CD player, will carry a base MSRP of \$30,475 (including Destination and Delivery charges).

Currently, the Louisville Assembly Plant in Louisville, Ky., and the St. Louis Assembly Plant in St. Louis, Mo., are producing the new Explorer with the V-6 engine. Both plants will begin building Ford Explorer and Mercury Mountaineer models with the new 4.6-liter SOHC V-8 engine later this year.

This plan allows both plants to optimize the build of one series of models before adding the complexity of an additional powertrain.



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