BIF's Journey to Dearborn

By Candace Kawatsu, Detroit Public Schools
Hi! My name is BIF which stands for Banded Iron Formation. Look where the arrow is and you can see where I live. I live at 123 Tilden, way up in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.
Bang! The explosion is really loud! I am broken into pieces as I am heaved into the air!
After the dust settles, a giant electric shovel loads me into an enormous truck to transport me to the crusher. The truck's wheels are twelve feet tall!
Whee! I slide into the crusher where I am further reduced in size.
Grinder

Next I go into the grinder where I am rolled and turned. I am broken into even smaller pieces.
Now I am in the pebble mill to roll and turn some more. I keep getting smaller.
I am still a low-grade crude ore. In the cobbers and finishers in this picture, my iron particles get separated from my waste rock. Powerful magnets attract my iron particles which go to the balling drum.
I am a fine iron ore powder when I go in the balling drum. I am mixed with some fillers and made into pellets.
This is how I look when I come out of the balling drum. I am called a green ball. I am the proper size and shape, but I am too soft to handle. I must go through a furnace and into a huge rotary kiln to harden.
Here is how I look after I come out of the kiln where it was 2200 degrees F! I am cooled and ready to begin my journey to Dearborn. Notice how red I am now. Now I am called processed iron ore or taconite.
I am loaded onto a train to go to Marquette.
I am on my way to the port of Marquette on Lake Superior.
I tumble through a chute into the vessel's cargo hold here in Marquette Harbor. The noise is deafening as the rest of the taconite thunders down the chutes. Soon my voyage on Lake Superior begins.
I am on Lake Superior now. I feel so tiny in this vast water.
My voyage takes me right past the Whitefish Point Light Station. It guides my ship as it has guided ships on these treacherous waters since 1849.
My ship goes through the Soo Locks which is like an elevator for boats. Soon we will be in Lake Huron.
Luckily the weather is calm on Lake Huron today. I won't get seasick!
We pass these boats on Lake Huron.
My freighter leaves Lake Huron and passes under the Blue Water Bridge. I travel on the St. Clair River.
I pass downtown Detroit as I travel down the Detroit River.
Now I am in the Rouge River in Dearborn. The drawbridge is opening to let my ship pass. People in cars must wait to cross the bridge until my ship clears.
This freighter is departing the steel mill. Soon my freighter will dock and unload. It has been a long trip!
My voyage is finally over. I am getting unloaded at the steel mill on the Rouge River in Dearborn.
This is where I will be made into steel.
This is the blast furnace where I will be heated and mixed with coke.
Here I am in the castor where I am being made into a solid steel slab.
Now I am in the hot strip mill where I will be transformed from a steel slab to a steel sheet.
I am all coiled up now!
I am ready to be made into truck doors, hoods, and body panels!
This is the Dearborn Assembly Plant where I will become part of a powerful truck. I wonder what color truck I will become. Red is my favorite color.
Yeah! I am becoming part of a red truck!
I am almost finished!
The final product: one of the best selling trucks in the world!
A man bought me! I will help him haul cargo. He is even going to take me on vacation! It was a long journey from the Tilden Mine!