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Chevrolet Race Car at Emerson School Drives Home Education to 5th Graders

by Gerald Scott
News Dept.

About 40 days and counting, as it happens.

That's how many days until the Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix grips the Motor City for the first weekend in June – the big event is scheduled for June 1-3.

This all came to light last week at Ralph Waldo Emerson Elementary School on Detroit's near-west side, near the 7 Mile and Southfield Road area of town.

There, Detroit Grand Prix and Penske Racing officials gathered to display an open-wheel Chevrolet-powered race car, all to impress the schoolkids and to let the world know that the big race is right around the corner as well.

Together, these officials and school leaders also announced a new program called Fifth Gear, which combines a mathematics and science curriculum to generate excitement among Detroit Public Schools' 5th graders for careers in science, technology, engineering and math – the famous STEM curriculum.

What's different here is that the Emerson 5th graders, among other DPS students, will do all this learning from a motorsports perspective.

The program is funded by a grant from the PNC Bank Foundation under the stewardship of the Detroit Public Schools Foundation.

DPS was represented at the event by Roy Roberts, former



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

Schoolchildren at Ralph Waldo Emerson Elementary in Detroit check out the Chevrolet open-wheel racer on display last week.

GM vice president and current emergency manager for the Detroit Public Schools.

"Since we announced the return of the Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix, it has been our desire to create an aspirational program involving DPS students that includes a great learning environment," said Bud Denker, event chairman of the Grand Prix.

"Science and math are critical skills that are used every day in business and life, but also in racing."

"With the assistance of PNC Bank and DPS leadership, we will welcome over 600 students to the Grand Prix. These are

young people that may experience an event like this for the first time, building an annual program that we hope will create the spark for many to pursue science, technology and math as core programs in their futures."

Three Detroit Public Schools' robotics teams will also attend PNC Bank/Free Prix Day. Participating school teams include Cass Tech, Westside Academy and Davis Aerospace Technical High School.

Each team will even bring the robots that they created earlier to display on-site, and they will also help serve as mentors to the younger stu-



Ex-GM VP Roy Roberts, center, who today is the Detroit Public Schools Emergency Manager, led the display of the Chevrolet Grand Prix demo racer on a visit to Emerson Elementary in Detroit last week. A new program called Fifth Gear will send 5th graders to visit the race on Belle Isle in June.

dents attending, such as those from Emerson.

"Having our students involved in an event of this magnitude further demonstrates the DPS commitment, as well as that of our community partners, to educate students outside the classroom,"

said DPS' Roberts.

The Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix returns to the

Motor City for the first time since 2008, when driver Justin Wilson won the race.

GM Engineers Support WSU's Entry in DOE Contest

by Jim Stickford
Special Writer

The Wayne State College of Engineering and General Motors have joined forces to participate in a Department of Energy (DOE) contest designed to help train the next generation of alternative energy automotive engineers.

The contest, called EcoCAR 2 – Plugging into the Future, is a \$740 million effort spread over three years.

Fifteen universities – 13 in the United States and two in Canada – are participating. Phase one is already taking place.

Jeff Rednor, Wayne State's EcoCAR outreach team coordinator, said the participating schools will build and install an alternative fuel drivetrain into a 2013 Chevy Malibu.

Right now, the teams are in the first phase of the contest – designing their systems. They get their vehicles at a special event in Los Angeles later in May.

Year Two is spent installing the systems into their vehicles and getting them to work. In Year Three, they refine Year Two's work and make the vehicles "street legal."

Kimberly DeClark, of the DOE's Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois, said the DOE has been holding contests like this for the past 23 years. The idea being that students get practical experience and are trained to be the country's next generation of automotive engineers.

The teams – Wayne State's is called the Hybrid Warriors – are judged at the end of each phase of the contest, DeClark said.

The schools are helped by team and event sponsors, who provide hardware, software, expertise and mentoring.

"No school has the tens of millions of dollars of equipment needed for the contest," DeClark said.

"A123 is a local company and they are providing energy storage systems and battery modules to the Hybrid Warriors, for example."

Event sponsors include The



PHOTO: JAMES STICKFORD

GM engineer Jim Kolhoff with a 2012 Chevy Malibu set up at Wayne State to promote the upcoming EcoCAR contest. Students will place their designs into 2013 Malibus beginning in May as EcoCAR 2 kicks off. GM and the Dept. of Energy are sponsors.

able to start work right off the bat. Some of them have even been able to apply for patents as student interns."

Kolhoff said in past years, he's worked as a judge and a leader of past vehicle contests. What impresses him is the passion the students bring with them.

"They also learn how to work across the boundaries of their various disciplines and they learn teamwork."

"Programs like EcoCAR are important because students learn valuable technical skills and, also importantly, they learn leadership skills and how to operate in a real-world environment away from the classroom," Kolhoff said.

Dr. Jerry Ku, Wayne State's lead faculty advisor, said the school's team is designing a plug-in hybrid that will have two drivetrains. A traditional internal combustion engine,

as well as a system with charger, battery and electric motor, is placed in the rear of the vehicle.

"This provides students with hands-on experience and GM provides great mentoring help," Ku said. "The key to all this is collaboration."

WSU dean of engineering Farshad Fotouh, said he's proud that the University is involved in the contest and that Wayne State's alternative energy program is a leader across the country.

"Our industry-first in-vehicle wireless charging system is the perfect solution for those connected customers who are always on the go."

For easy access, a seamlessly integrated power bin, measuring 8.27 inches by 9.5 inches by 3.25 inches, is installed just below the center stack and in front of the center console.

The bin has a built-in charging grid that is activated when customers place in their battery-powered device. The unit begins to charge



Chrysler Group LLC introduces industry-first in-vehicle wireless charging.

when the vehicle is started.

A phone case, specifically designed for a variety of smartphones, is required and included with the feature.

Mopar in-vehicle wireless charging is available for \$199.99, plus installation (part number 82213216).

The new Dodge Dart, say Chrysler officials, hits the mark with a modern, unmistakable Dodge design that features great exterior proportions and unmistakable Dodge cues like the "race-track" taillamps and signature front grille.

The exterior, Chrysler officials say, not only looks good, but delivers world-class aerodynamic performance and an agile, fun-to-drive experience on the road.

The Dart is the first Chrysler Group vehicle built on Fiat Group architecture; it's based off of the award-winning Alfa Romeo Giulietta. The car debuted in January.

Faurecia's OEM Customer Demand Is Up Following Economic Downturn

by Gerald Scott
News Dept.

If supplier prosperity is a measure of overall growth of the Motor City auto industry, here's hoping the notable growth that Faurecia North America in Auburn Hills is enjoying is a harbinger of better days to come for everybody.

That's because Faurecia, a French auto interiors supplier, is enjoying rapid growth, having hired over 650 people in Michigan alone last year, indicating that their OEM customer demand is up again.

Michael Heneka, president, Faurecia North America, discussed his firm's growth from Faurecia's headquarters facility on Executive Hills Blvd., which is a technology court just a stone's throw from the Pontiac Silverdome to the west and Chrysler headquarters to the east and north.

"This was the first building in this locale . . . there were no restaurants and no hotels, we were kind of out here all by ourselves," Heneka recalled.

"Frankly, the land was available at the right price at the

right time. We do business with all of the automobile manufacturers. Would it make more sense to be in Southfield? I don't know, maybe. What's happened is people live around here.

"We're looking at a satellite plant right now more toward the Dearborn area (to support our Ford work)."

Faurecia is larger than you might first think or imagine – it's the 9th largest auto supplier in North America with sales of \$4.8 billion in 2011. It



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

Outlined against Ficus Benjaminia trees inside Faurecia's Auburn Hills headquarters facility on Executive Hills Blvd. are Mike Heneka, left, president of Faurecia North America and Jean-Michel Renaudie, president of Faurecia Interior Systems.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4