



A Dodge dealer gets the jump on the Dart Driveaway at the Palace of Auburn Hills last Wednesday afternoon.

## Dealers Pack Palace Lot To Pick Up Dodge Darts

Story and photo by Gerald Scott

Nothing like an ocean of cars, same model/same color, to make the auto industry's eyes pop in marketing glory. So it was at the Palace of Auburn Hills last week, where Chrysler Group and its Dodge brand rented the west parking lot as part of a promotion to put the car keys to 250 bright red Dodge Darts in the hands of dealers who came to town from all over the country.

In all, nearly 300 dealers gathered at the Palace last Wednesday, one of those hot, muggy, but sun-shiny days here in Southeast Michigan, all to deliver the acclaimed 2013 Dodge Dart to dealerships across Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky.

"There is tremendous excitement about the Dodge Dart," said Richard Cox, director, Dodge Brand. "It takes so much momentum to get this kind of response - to pack the Palace with dealers - it is a testament to how special this vehicle truly is."

Fresh from the Chrysler assembly plant in Illinois that builds them, Dodge assembled 250 Darts representing five trim levels and then gathered all of those cars in the west parking lot.

One dealer said it showed that Detroit was back in business again, following all of the economic turmoil and what-not from just four years ago now.

The Dodge Dart trim levels represented at the driveaway include the following:

- Dart SE: \$15,995;
- Dart SXT: \$17,995;
- Dart Rallye: \$18,995;
- Dart Limited: \$19,995;
- Dodge Dart R/T: \$22,495 (available in third quarter of 2012 calendar year).

The Dart is Chrysler's first such competitive compact-sized car following the demise of the aging and now-defunct Neon car brand over six years ago now.

Dodge said that the Palace event was actually one of 12 such "Dealer Driveaway" programs taking place across the U.S. during June.

The Dart debuted at the Detroit auto show in January to largely positive critical acclaim and the Dodge dealer body has been clamoring for a compact-car replacement, all to better compete against the Chevrolet Cruze and the

Ford Focus in the domestic marketplace.

Truth be known, most auto plants in Southeast Michigan have either on-site, or nearby areas to marshal, count and otherwise ship their vehicles, so "an ocean of cars" represented by the Dodge dealer driveaway isn't an uncommon sight here in the Motor City, at least.

But still, for an automaker that almost went out of business in 2009, the sight of 250 bright red Dodge Darts all together in one place at one time, is perhaps a harbinger of good things to come for the Auburn Hills company. Dart is hitting the bullseye, indeed.

## GM Restructures Design Organization

WARREN, Mich. - GM Global Design has announced a revised organizational structure and executive appointments that align it more closely with the company's brands across its network of 10 design centers around the world.

"This new structure provides a foundation to build and grow the design language for each of our brands moving forward," said Ed Welburn, GM vice president for Global Design.

"It gives our design teams a greater opportunity to create products and brands that have an emotional connection with our customers and that continue to move our company forward."

The benefits of a more brand-focused design organization include:

- Drive stronger - and common - messaging across a brand's portfolio
- Allow designers to better understand - and design for - customers when they live the brand on a day-to-day basis
- Provide for greater parts sharing across brands
- Foster more creativity and provide a clear, single purpose for each design team member.

The revised structure also increases the role of GM's Advanced Design Centers, which are strategically located in the United States, Germany, Korea, China and Australia.

"Strengthening our Advanced Design organization will allow us to help the company develop innovative new technologies and strategies to meet the future transportation needs of the global marketplace," Welburn said.

"One thing is clear: Success will require a variety of mobility solutions that are striking both in their execution and their efficiency."

The new structure and appointments are effective Aug. 1. The following executives will report to Welburn:

Ken Parkinson, currently executive director, North American Exterior



GM Vice President for Global Design Ed Welburn, with Camaro ZL1, has announced Global Design organization changes to create more brand focus and stronger Advanced Design capabilities.

Design/Global Architecture Strategy and Chevrolet "Brand Champion," is appointed executive director, Global Chevrolet and GMC Design.

Mark Adams, currently vice president - GM Europe Design and "Brand Champion" for Opel/Vauxhall, will relocate to Warren and is appointed executive director, Global Cadillac and Buick Design.

David Lyon, currently executive director - North American Interiors/Global Cross-Brand Design and Buick/GMC "Brand Champion," will relocate to Russelsheim, Germany, and is appointed vice president - GME Design, with an emphasis on growing the Opel/Vauxhall brand. Lyon will sit on the leadership team of Karl-Friedrich Stracke, president, GM Europe and CEO of Opel/Vauxhall.

Clay Dean, currently director - North American Advanced Design and Cadillac "Brand Champion," is ap-



David Lyon is appointed vice president, GME Design.



Mark Adams is executive director, Cadillac and Buick Design.

pointed to the new position of director - Global Advanced Design. Dean will serve as the lead integrator and coordinator of all Advanced Design activity around the world.

Bryan Nesbitt, vice president - GMIO Design and "Brand Champion" for Wuling and Baojun, will continue to

serve as the lead voice for Design in the GMIO region and focus on developing and growing the company's operations in China and India.

## Just When You Think You've Seen It All . . . All This Comes Rolling Through



At left is the pup named "Baby Sportster / Harley Davidson," seen at Roadside Attractions in Metamora, the northern stop on the Culver's Poker Run. Above is a semi loaded with retention drains, barreling through last Wednesday's classic car Cruise-In at Lapeer. Related story, page 3.

## 50 Duos Race Clock to Repair Deliberate 'Bugs' in Ford/AAA Contest

Story and photos by Irena Granaas

"Lady and gentlemen, start your engines - if you can!"

With that challenge thrown down by Marshall Doney, AAA vice president of Automotive, Financial Services and E-Business, 99 young men and one young lady representing high schools from all 50 states hastened against a clock to diagnose and repair "bugs" deliberately placed in identical 2012 Ford Fiestas.

Each two-man (or in the case of Nebraska, a co-ed team) vied for their share of bragging rights plus nearly \$12 million in scholarships and prizes at the 63rd Annual

Ford/AAA Student Auto Skills Competition held June 12 at Ford Motor Co. World Headquarters in Dearborn.

The 50 two-person teams each waged a fierce battle to be first to repair their car, but it was the Kansas team of Bryce Banks and Jedediah Redger from Newton High School, working under the watchful eye of instructor Cory Unruh, who captured highest honors.

As national champions, they won, among other prizes, a week-long job shadow experience with former Daytona 500 champion and popular NASCAR driver Trevor Bayne and his Wood Brothers Racing team in July,

as they prepare the No. 21 Motorcraft/Quick Lane Ford Fusion car for the Coke Zero 400 in Daytona Beach, Fla. - where Bayne's spectacular win took place when he was only age 20.

Bayne attended the Auto Skills event, where he spoke to the attendees, fielded media questions and signed autographs.

In addition to the team trophy they will be bringing back to Newton High School, Banks and Redger will each receive thousands of dollars in scholarships.

Other awards to each of them include an intake system from K&N Engineering (valued at \$500 each); a roll

cab and a starter set of tools from Snap-On Tools; and several thousands of dollars worth of additional tools from Napa Auto Parts.

The rest of the teams who finished in the top 10 received trophies, and all those in the top five spots received scholarships as well.

Michigan was ably represented once again by Saline High School. Students Evan Fischbach and Thomas Michalak, guided by instructor Tim Timoszyk, earned second-place honors overall, and ranked first on the written exam, which combined with auto repair element marks to form each team's final score.

Timoszyk received the AAA

Quality Automotive Teacher Award trophy for the team with the highest exam score.

According to AAA records, no Michigan team has ever won the Student Auto Skills competition, but Saline has been a very strong force over the past five years and rose to take the second-place prize once previously in 2007. The Michigan high school ranked 10th (out of 50) in 2011 and 2010.

Given the location and the Blue Oval's active participation in the Auto Skills contest over the years, it was fitting that Mark Fields, executive vice president, the Americas,

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