

DETROIT AUTO SCENE

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Visits U-M Labs
For Auto Health

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crash victims, measuring millions of data points that are useful not only for safety engineers but also enables more precise, personalized medical care.

"Morphomics helps bridge the gap between crash test dummies and real people," Haldenwanger said. "Being able to see individual variations from body to body is helping us understand at an anatomical level how to better adapt safety systems to provide a higher level of protection to a wider segment of the population."

The ICAM research has helped the GM engineers better understand leg and hip injuries in frontal crashes. This, in turn, helps them design knee bolsters and seat belts to help mitigate injuries to lower extremities.

"Understanding what people go through biomechanically as a result of vehicle crashes is a strong motivator for finding ways to prevent injuries from happening in the first place, or at the very least lessen their severity," Kayser said.

For all the high-tech analysis involved in ICAM work, it is the human side of the fellowship — specifically attending surgeries of crash victims — that profoundly affects GM's Safety Fellows.

"Knowing that crash field data is enabling first responders — as well as doctors and surgeons at U of M — help more crash victims make a full recovery is truly inspiring," Bunn said.

"Hopefully, the advances we're making in occupant protection as a result of this fellowship will mean even fewer people will suffer crash injuries in years to come."

Suffice to say that auto safety has come a long way such that the University of Michigan would host GM safety engineers and analysts in this particular fashion.

More and more, the Big Three, including GM, are coming to rely on university and medical research centers to prove out safety theories and provide feedback to auto engineering and design.

'Focus on Future' Autos Set for Sept.

The University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute (UMTRI) is hosting a major automotive conference called "Focus on the Future," on Weds., Sept. 12, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Michigan League on the U-M campus in Ann Arbor.

The conference theme is "The Business of IT: Transforming the Organization and the Vehicle."

This year's speakers will emphasize how IT helps manage the increasing complexity in the au-

TARDEC Officials Discuss Vehicle Needs at GVSETS

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ments while simultaneously maintaining lethality and protection for occupants.

One speaker, Dale Ormond, director of U.S. Army Research at RDECOM, noted that Army vehicle engineers and planners are closer to the "customer" than ever before, going out into the field constantly to monitor needs of soldiers as they use the current fleet of vehicles and weapons.

"We have people out there talking to soldiers, understanding what their challenges are, we have the scientists and engineers (engaged)," said Ormond, himself a former nuclear submarine sailor.

"The acquisition process, by its nature, is somewhat long. We transfer a lot of technologies that come out of what we do (into) industry and then industry sells us a better capability.

"I think that's a great model." What's interesting from the supplier point of view is that Ormond mentioned that unmanned aerial vehicles, UAVs or drones as they're called, are becoming a bigger and bigger influence on the battlefield so now drones and vehicles (and the soldiers) driving them all have to work in greater harmony.

What he didn't say was whether

the still expensive UAV fleet was growing in Army ranks perhaps at the expense of the next generation of military ground vehicles.

Participants at the show included major suppliers with presences across Southeast Michigan, including Textron, Navistar, Oshkosh, BAE Systems, General Dynamics Land Systems, AM General and more.

Army vehicle programs appear

to be in flux as the military has exited Iraq and has plans to exit Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

Smaller, faster, lighter is the general battle cry these days as mobility appears to be challenging lethality for supremacy regarding the design factors built into military vehicles, whether tracked, wheeled or self-propelled.

There were a wide variety of military vehicles on display at

the Troy Marriott during the three-day conference, but one that attracted plenty of attention from attendees was a Fisker Karma EV sports car.

All black in color, it looked fierce in exterior design, but no word on whether there is room for a slick-looking electric roadster in the Army's budget. But with everything in flux these days, you never know.



At the TARDEC-sponsored GVSETS military ground vehicles conference.

Photo by Gerald Scott

Teams, Technology Work Together at Electrification Ctr.

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To that end, the company has an aggressive strategy of launching electric and hybrid model vehicles. This year alone Ford is launching six electric vehicles.

This is possible, Bakaj said, thanks to global development and flexible manufacturing. He said the upcoming CMAX model got its start in Europe, and it's now possible to build five vehicles from one platform in one manufacturing plant.

"The benefits apply not just to vehicles, but also to powertrains," Bakaj said. "We will build at our Van Dyke plant the only front-wheel drive hybrid powertrain."

Bakaj said Ford's ultimate goal is to deliver best-in-class power economies across all platforms and all powertrains. By the end of the year, Ford should have eight

vehicles that get 40 mpg or better. This is the result of a plan that was implemented during the height of the economic downturn.

Eric Kuehn, chief engineer of global electrification programs, says all these improvements have been achieved without sacrificing performance. The people want a "real car" with a real car performance even if they are buying an electric or hybrid vehicle.

He noted the CMAX does just that with 188 horsepower on tap, with 62 horsepower in EV mode. Other vehicles such as the Fusion offer the widest choice of engine selection, Kuehn said. The Fusion Energi aims to become America's most fuel efficient mid-size sedan without sacrificing performance.

Kuehn said power of choice is an institutionalized mantra among the company's engineers and ex-

ecutives. But this concept is also being emphasized among Ford dealers.

There is a program to make dealerships EV-certified. That means Ford new car dealership staff receive specialized training to be able to better inform, and thus sell, electric vehicles and hybrids to customers. The idea is not to just sell these vehicles, but to match the best powertrain to the customer's lifestyle.

"We have put the pedal to the metal in terms of development and sales," Kuehn said.

"We will have the freshest lineup in the marketplace. We have included all segments and all platforms. The One Ford plan is all about this. This all goes back to

our launching off points that were determined during the recent downturn."

Kuehn said it's easier to sacrifice long-term goals in favor of short-term profits during bad times, but Ford made a conscious choice not to sacrifice the long-term plans to the "problems of today."

Chrysler Displays 2013 Dodge Dart, Viper, Raminator Monster Truck, And Vehicles from the Museum

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Brand, Chrysler Group LLC.

"With some of the most recognized and revered vehicles in the industry, this is a great way to connect with our passionate owners and enthusiasts, celebrating both our heritage and future technology."

Located at the corner of Woodward and 13 mile in Royal Oak, this year the Chrysler Group was to feature more than 75 vehicles on display, including the 2013 Dodge Dart Rally Car with 600 horsepower, 2013 SRT Viper and more than a dozen classic Walter P. Chrysler Museum vehicles, as well as several Moparized cars

and trucks. Visitors also got an up-close look at the Ram brand Raminator Monster Truck.

In addition to vehicle eye candy, attendees were to have received a demonstration of the Chrysler Group's Uconnect technologies in the Uconnect trailer, viewed Mopar performance parts at the Mopar Image Center trailer and shopped for a variety of merchandise available from each brand.

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