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Construction in Auburn Hills on the Move

by Jennifer Knightstep

It's difficult not to notice the signs of growth scattered around the City of Auburn Hills, in particular, several new construction projects.

There's the new 46,000-square-foot Plastics Plus facility on North Atlantic Drive, and the Inalfa light-industrial project on Jocelyn Road, where a Food Town grocery store used to be.

There's even a \$14 million public-private development, combining 6,000 square feet of retail space, a 279-space parking structure, and nearly 100 graduate-level student apartments, located at Grey Road between Auburn Road and Primary in downtown Auburn Hills.

Most Midwestern cities would welcome this new development and construction with much fanfare, since most are still struggling to pull themselves out of a recession-ravaged new construction slump, but for Laurie Renaud, Economic Development coordinator with the City of Auburn Hills, this new construction is, well, nothing new – though she is delighted.

"We've experienced new construction throughout the economic downturn," says Renaud, "but new construction is always exciting."

In particular, the public-private student housing and parking development, tentatively scheduled to open early in 2013, is interesting – an innovative combination of purposes, structures and affinity partners.

On most weekdays, the population of Auburn Hills swells with more than 20,000 students from Oakland University, Cooley Law School, Baker College, Oakland



Dormitory rising in downtown Auburn Hills.

Community College and an extension of Central Michigan University located in the city. The City of Auburn Hills sees those students as potential residents, adding to the city their talents, energy, and vibrancy.

The privately-owned, -funded, and -operated apartment portion of the new construction will feature amenities meant to attract those students, including study areas, attached parking, laundry facilities, and exercise equipment. No doubt, in October 2011, when the Auburn Hills City Council approved the new construction project, they were imagining

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Man on cell phone at Plastics Plus expansion on North Atlantic.



Hot Wheels Vice President of Design Felix Holst.

Bringing Memories to Life With Hot Wheels Camaros

If you think the new Chevrolet Camaro introduced at the SEMA show in Las Vegas on Oct. 29 looks like a Hot Wheels toy on steroids, that's because the vehicle is actually based on a Hot Wheels model car first sold in 1968.

"Millions of us grew up playing with Hot Wheels," said Chris Perry, vice president of Chevrolet marketing.

"Offering a special production model of the Camaro Hot Wheels is an opportunity to bring those

memories to life, for kids of all ages."

Jim Campbell, Chevy motorsports vice president, said Hot Wheels and Camaro debuted at the same time back in the 1960s.

"When I am asked why Hot Wheels and Chevrolet, I say because it has brand association," Campbell said. "The public will be able to buy two types of Hot Wheels Camaro. One is a special model that real enthusiasts can

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Chrysler's Nancy Rae Awarded by ASE As Human Resources Executive of Year

In June of 2000, Nancy A. Rae was named the senior vice president of Human Resources at Chrysler. Since then, she's won accolades and honors across the board.

Award have come for her dedication to building a diverse workforce and for other aspects of her organizational leadership, ensuring the success of her company and the well-being and inclusion of its employees.

This month, Chrysler's Rae added to her impressive list of awards, honored as Human Resources Executive of the Year by the American Society of Employers (ASE), an affiliate of the Em-

ployer Associations of America.

Rae has faced challenges in reorganizing and rebuilding Chrysler's workforce, hiring 16,000 people since June 2009, when the company was bailed out.

The bailout loans were repaid in May 2011 due in part to Rae's dedication to the recovery and restructuring process, a fact that surely figured in her nomination for the ASE recognition.

According to a press release, the ASE scrutinizes nominees based on "the nominee's commitment to the HR profession, past and current successes, contribu-

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Faurecia 'xWorks'

Faurecia, which maintains its North American offices in Auburn Hills and is the sixth-largest global automotive supplier, has been recognized for its sustained and quantifiable innovation success by the Product Development & Management Association (PDMA) at the organization's annual global conference Oct. 20-24 in Orlando, Fla.

The award is presented to innovators in such diverse categories as computer technology, materials science, automotive, health care and consumer products. Faurecia was acknowledged for its innovation in the automotive industry and for its ability to spot trends and turn ideas into products.

The PDMA chose to honor Faurecia after a rigorous nine-month examination of the company's processes and products. The PDMA study focused on the activities of Faurecia's "xWorks" innovation incubator in Holland, Mich., one of the company's dedicated centers that conceptualize automotive seating products.

The team and its process have developed such products as SmartFit, a system that enables drivers and occupants to use their smartphones to automatically adjust their vehicle seats to the best position for their own body.

Another innovation that was developed using Faurecia's methodology was the Performance Seat, a unique dynamic comfort system and composite back technology to create a comfortable, safe seating system that is 20 percent thinner and 20 percent lighter than conventional seats.

While Faurecia engaged the PDMA Outstanding Corporate Innovator (OCI) Committee with its seating innovations, the Outstanding Corporate Innovator Award recognizes the innovation process that Faurecia employs across all the company's product groups, including automotive seating, emissions control technologies, interior systems and automotive exteriors.

The committee indicated that particular interest in top management's direct engagement in the innovation process and the way that Faurecia's innovation has translated directly into commercial activity.

"Faurecia is focused on open innovation," said Rob Huber, vice president of innovation for Faurecia North America.

"We're constantly looking outside the company and the industry to find the best ideas that can move our industry forward in such arenas as light-weighting, passenger wellness and comfort, premium features and other critical trends. We're set up to work actively with people outside the company to translate these concepts into real products."

Recipients of the innovator award were required to demonstrate a sustained record of success in launching new products or services over a five-year period. They also were required to produce significant and quantifiable business results delivered by new products or services, consistent use of a set of teachable new-product development practices, and distinctive innovative organizational characteristics.



Nancy A. Rae, senior vice president of Human Resources at Chrysler.