



The 1937 Chevrolet Coach with a front bench seat.



The 1963 Chevrolet Impala Sport Sedan with a front bench seat.

## Gone Soon but Not Forgotten, Bench Seats May Return One Day, Due to Space

DETROIT – When the 2014 Chevrolet Impala arrives next year, it will put to rest a fixture of automobiles since the days of the horseless carriage – the front bench seat.

The outgoing Impala is the last passenger car in production in North America to offer three-across front seating, an option that ends with the introduction of Chevy's redesigned flagship sedan.

The passing of the front bench seat into automotive history is

expected to transpire without notice from many car buyers. Only one in ten Impala buyers chose the \$195 option last year on the LS and LT models. For many of today's car buyers, front bucket seats are the norm – a trend that General Motors designers expect will continue.

"A lot of people prefer bucket seats because they're sporty, even in models that aren't sports cars," said Clay Dean, GM director of design.

"Our customers also appreciate having the center console as a convenient place to store their phone and other personal items."

The first Chevrolet ever manufactured, the Series C Classic Six of 1911, featured a front bench seat. Chevrolet will continue to offer bench seats on pickup trucks and sport utilities.

The need for six-passenger sedans is largely being met today by SUVs or crossovers, such as the Chevrolet Suburban and Tra-

verse, which offer seating for up to eight.

"There is certain nostalgia for bench seats, like being able to snuggle up with your date at a drive-in movie, and some customers still like them," Dean said.

"You never know, we might see bench seats re-emerge someday, possibly in very small cars like the EN-V urban mobility concept vehicle, in which the feeling of open space may be very desirable."

## Center Line Boasts Its Right To Say It's Home to Mopar

by Jim Stickford

The City of Center Line was recently declared the official home of Chrysler's Mopar division.

Center Line mayor David Hanselman said that it only made sense to make what was unofficial official.

"I grew up in Center Line," Hanselman said. "Mopar has been with us since I was a young boy. I watched them construct the building back in the 1950s. They maintain their world headquarters here and have a warehouse here."

City Manager John Michrina said that Center Line is a relatively small city, and when he talks with other city managers, they ask what's in Center Line.

"I ask them if they've ever heard of Mopar," Michrina said. "We're proud of the fact that a business that employs thousands of people across the globe is based in Center Line. We want the world to know that and the best way to get the word out is to put that fact on the 'Welcome to Center Line' sign."

The sign can be seen at the corner of 10 Mile Road and Sherwood, one of the western entrances to the city.

Pat Caporali, Chrysler communications, said that while Chrysler has recently been emphasizing the Mopar brand across the globe, they thought it was great when Center Line officials said they wanted to honor their company in a more local way.

"We have been putting more emphasis on Mopar globally," Caporali said. "We want people to consider Mopar products and services to encompass more than just the 'muscle car' market. When Center Line approached us with their proposal, our reaction was, 'That's really nice.'"

Mopar's national parts distribution center and packing operations are based in Center Line and employ more than 1,000 hourly and salaried employees.

More than 280,000 authentic Mopar performance parts and accessories are distributed from the Center Line warehouse to 319 international and 20 North American shipping points in the United States. From there, parts are sent to 120 different countries.

Caporali said Mopar has just

formed a partnership with Magneti Marelli to extend Mopar's reach around the world. She also said that the Jeep brand is becoming a stronger global brand and can be serviced by Mopar parts and service centers.

Hanselman said that he has been a car guy all his life. He watched the area around Center Line develop over the years, going from an almost rural atmosphere to a more urban, developed part of metro Detroit.

"When my friends and I were young, we were car guys," Hanselman said. "We fixed and rebuilt cars to race, so Mopar was a big part of our lives when we were young. You can't do that now, but that's what we did in those days."

Chrysler is also proud to call Center Line home to Mopar.

"Mopar has enjoyed a major presence in Center Line since 1953, and we're very proud to call it our home," said Pietro Grolier, president and CEO of Mopar Chrysler Group LLC's service, parts and customer-care brand.

"We sincerely appreciate the mayor making it official by sharing the moniker with the rest of the city and its visitors."

Hanselman said having Mopar headquarters in Center Line is more than just a matter of bragging rights.

"It wasn't too long ago that about 600 people were employed at their office and warehouse," Hanselman said. "But recently they've added more people, so about 1,000 now work there."

"That means something to the city because those additional 400 people go to lunch, they shop at local stores, they support our local businesses. Having Mopar in Center Line makes a difference in the city, and we want to acknowledge that."

## Interceptor Tops Field

Ford's new Police Interceptors led the pack in recent testing by the Michigan State Police.

In testing at Grattan Raceway near Grand Rapids, the Police Interceptor all-wheel-drive utility vehicle posted top 0-60 mph and 0-80 mph times in the acceleration tests, and also achieved the quickest lap times versus competing police utility vehicles.



Ford Interceptor utility vehicle

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