

Chevy and Students Engineer Hand-Driven Cycle for Vets

Prior to the playing of the 113th Army-Navy football game, Chevrolet and students from Michigan Technological University revealed a new hand cycle designed to make it easier for wounded veterans to compete in racing events, including marathons.

In addition, GM Chairman and CEO Dan Akerson announced GM will build 10 prototypes for use next year by the Achilles Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans in marathons across the country.

Akerson accompanied retired Marine Cpl. Joseph Woodke of Port Hope, Mich., a member of the Achilles Freedom Team, as he rode the new cycle onto the field during the first quarter of the game.

“GM has a long tradition of serving those who serve,” said Akerson. “That includes devoting our engineering and technology resources to give these veterans a competition-worthy cycle that honors their sacrifice for our country.”

Stronger, as well as more comfortable, durable and portable than current commercially available cycles, this one was designed by Michigan Tech mechanical engineering students as part of a senior project named Huskies Helping Heroes.

Sponsored by GM and mentored by Chevrolet engineers and Michigan Tech faculty, the students spent time with the wounded veterans to observe their

competitions and design a cycle that meets their needs.

Three-wheel hand cycles allow athletes to lean forward while pumping the wheels with their hands. For veterans who are amputees or who have sustained other serious injuries, this is often a better solution for racing than a traditional wheelchair.

GM’s Military Discount Program underwrites several Achilles Freedom Team competitions, and has supplied cycles and a Chevrolet Silverado HD for transporting them.

Chevrolet was the Official Vehicle of the Army-Navy game, which was played at Lincoln Financial Field in Philadelphia.

Joining Akerson and Hayes on the field Saturday were Michigan Tech senior James Cook, of Lexington, Ky., and GM engineer Alexa Ellswood.

“I loved working with the students and seeing their energy and passion,” Ellswood said. “This isn’t their last class. It’s their first job.”

The new cycle uses high-strength steel alloys for durability; improved restraints for comfort and safety; and designs that make them more portable and less prone to damage during transit. For example, a pivoting fork-to-frame attachment allows the front wheel assembly to fold into the seat during travel, which reduces the overall size of the cycle.

Huskies Helping Heroes formed

in January with four teams and grew to five in September.

“This is the most rewarding assignment I’ve ever worked on,” said Michigan Tech senior Brett Jenkins of Troy, Mich., who led one of the student teams.

The Army-Navy game, among college football’s biggest rivalries, pits the U.S. Naval Academy Midshipmen against the U.S. Military Academy Black Knights. At a vehicle display near the stadium, Chevrolet representatives distributed free seat cushions and hot cocoa.

Fans saw a special Chevrolet Camaro ZL1 that will be auctioned in January to benefit the

Achilles Freedom Team.

GM and the GM Military Discount Program began their affiliation with the Achilles Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans in 2010. Achilles officials visit with wounded service members as they recuperate in military hospitals, where they can learn to use specialized adaptive devices, such as hand cycles, for competitions.

“The Achilles Freedom Team is thrilled to be the first to compete in these groundbreaking, state-of-the-art hand cycles, as it will take their racing goals to the next level,” said Genna Griffith, the team’s executive director.



Michigan Technological University senior engineering student James Cook with the Tomahawk racing hand cycle he helped engineer.

Walsh’s Bergeron And Other Women Honored by MBPA At Jan.16 Program

Women leaders will be honored by the Michigan Business and Professional Association at its 17th Annual “Women and Leadership in the Workplace” Symposium and Awards program on Wednesday, Jan. 16, at The Henry in Dearborn.

Registration starts at 7:30 a.m. followed by a lunch. The conference runs until 1 p.m.

The event is held to promote high professional standards, encourage leadership, provide education and assure equal advantages for women, say MBPA leaders.

This year’s theme is “Power Forward With Your Strength.” More than 500 women are expected to attend the event.

This year’s honorees represent extraordinary professional women who have excelled in distinct categories. They include:

- Business: Nancy Hickey, Steelcase
- Professional: Anne Doyle, Anne Doyle Strategies
- Civic & Community Affairs: Kathleen Stiso Mullins, Edsel & Eleanor Ford House and the Henry Ford Estate
- Philanthropic: Linda Forte, Comerica Foundation
- Media: Rochelle Riley, Detroit Free Press
- Education: Stephanie Bergeron, Walsh College
- Small Business Achievement: Amanda Christides, Plymouth Technology
- Shooting Stars (women under age 40): Kenyetta Campbell, Cody Rough Community Action Alliance; Maxine Gray, Herman-Miller; Elissa Hillary, Local First; and Dawn Stokes, RBS Citizens.

“These women are making a significant impact in our state and we are pleased to give them the recognition they so richly deserve,” said Jennifer Kluge, MBPA president.

Health Officials Urge Vaccination Against the Flu

An annual flu vaccine is the best way to prevent the flu and the flu-related complications that could lead to hospitalization and even death. Flu shots are available at Oakland University’s Graham Health Center for \$20.

As part of National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW), the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) recommends that all Michigan’s citizens 6 months and older get a flu shot.

Nationally, flu vaccination coverage estimates show that roughly 42 percent of people 6 months of age and older received a flu vaccine last season. Unfortunately, that means that the majority of those who are recommended to receive the influenza vaccination went unprotected. Michigan estimates for flu vaccination coverage are at 38.8 percent, which is even lower than the national average.

“Every year, flu spreads across the country from person to person, family to family, and community to community,” said James K. Haveman, Director of the MDCH. “One of the greatest challenges we face from the flu is the uncertainty of the disease. Flu viruses are constantly changing which is why we need to protect ourselves and our families with an annual flu vaccine.”

Last week flu activity throughout the United States increased. In Michigan, there is local flu activity, which reflects recent increases in laboratory-confirmed influenza cases and a facility outbreak from the Southwest region of the state.

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