

Oakland Tech News™

AUBURN HILLS AND ENVIRONS

VOL. 30 NO. 52

News of the Automotive, Technology and Supplier Community

JANUARY 7, 2013

Amphitheater On the Horizon For Downtown Auburn Hills

by Jennifer Knightstep

Brian Marzolf, recreation director at the City of Auburn Hills, isn't a man to rest on his laurels. Fresh on the heels of a slew of new construction, he's paused for breath, then launched an ambitious new project, expanding on the award-winning downtown riverwalk to include an amphitheater and more.

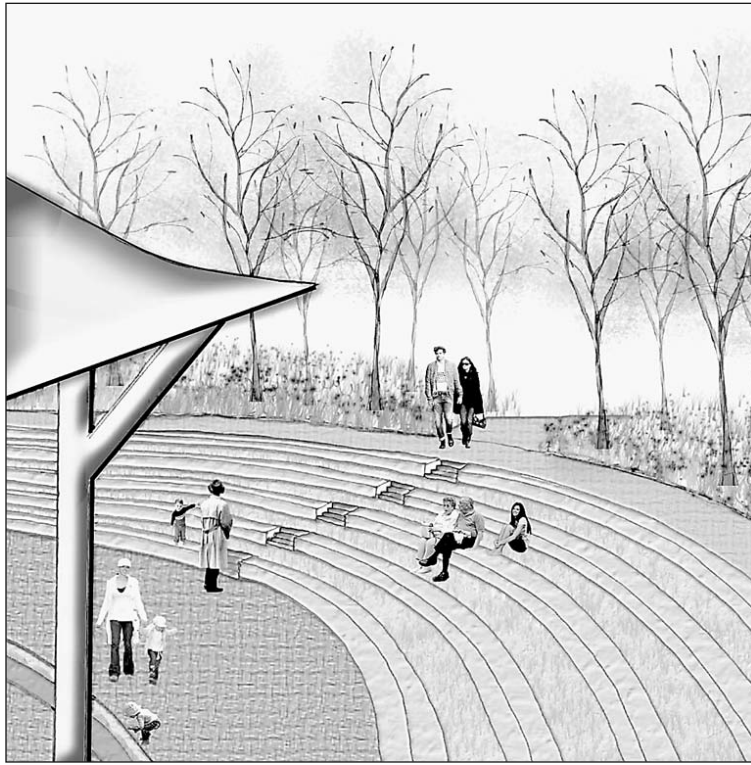
This project, said Marzolf, isn't some far-fetched pipe dream. It's a full-fledged active project, well into its design phase, "shovel-ready" in just a few months.

In fact, says Marzolf, the project has been moving forward since Auburn Hills' 2009 Economic Enhancement Strategy, which included adding to the public space in the downtown area as part of a "master plan."

"The design phase is funded, and is moving forward," explained Marzolf. "All that's left is to secure funding for the building phase, and of course, to build it."

The plan includes expanding the downtown riverwalk area to include a new amphitheater, boardwalk, and children's sprinkler park.

The city's vision for the new



Sketch of the amphitheater, which will be located in the Riverside District on the west side of Squirrel Road.

space is clear: they want the tens of thousands of people who work and go to school in Auburn Hills to stick around to enjoy arts and entertainment in the city's downtown area, and perhaps even lure some of them to make Auburn Hills their home.

Auburn Hills already boasts a unique downtown experience. Marzolf says the design will high-

light the river as a central theme, drawing people in by adding a little something for everyone.

Marzolf drew inspiration from various local downtowns, but notes there's nothing quite like his plan in the area, starting with the fact that few downtowns have a river running through them.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Powertrain's Hensel Is Recognized For Club GM's Effort with Charities

Barry Hensel, a senior designer at the GM Powertrain Headquarters in Pontiac, was just named Club GM's Contact Person of the Year for 2012.

Hensel said he's been a member of the club for about a decade and that the title, contact person, has a particular meaning in Club GM.

"A lot of people do a lot of different things in the club," Hensel said. "Many of us are classified as 'contact people.' For example, I am the contact person at the Pontiac powertrain HQ. That means if someone wants to buy Auto Show tickets through the club, they'd contact me."

Hensel said that he is known within the club for selling tickets to the North American International Auto Show and cards for Meals on Wheels.

"I actually got started in the club a decade ago when I found out the club sold Auto Show tickets. I was based in Ypsilanti back then and I called up Len Wernette and said I'd be willing to sell tickets myself.

"He said OK and gave me 200 tickets to sell. I sold them in a week and came back and asked if he had any more tickets for me to sell, and he said, 'Sure.' It took off from there.

"By my second or third year, I sold 1,100 tickets. That's what

started me down this path."

Hensel said this is the second time he was named Contact Person of the Year. The first time was back in 2004. He said he is only the third person to be so honored. Last year, he sold more than 1,200 Auto Show tickets.

Hensel is married to Margaret and they have three children - Heather, Julie and Michael.

In addition to selling the Auto Show tickets, Hensel also sells Meals on Wheels cards at \$5 each. All the proceeds go toward the Meals on Wheels program. He sells the cards around Easter and the Thanksgiving-to-Christmas holiday season.

"Club GM supports about 50 different charities," Hensel said. "At the November board meeting alone, we talked about giving out \$12,000 just for Christmas. When I sell an Auto Show ticket for \$9, we get to keep \$1."

And, Hensel said, he runs the Club GM store in the Pontiac powertrain building. It's new and one of three club stores that have been placed in GM buildings. They sell branded items like mugs, key chains and T-shirts. The Pontiac powertrain T-shirts, \$30 or \$32, depending on size, have proved to be particularly popular.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

What a Year! Detroit 3 Tear Up the Record Books

GM First to Sell a Million 30-mpg Vehicles in One Year

December of 2012 was a good month for GM with numbers indicating that U.S. dealers delivered the company's highest December sales in five years, with deliveries up 5 percent year-over-year to 245,733 vehicles.

December was also GM's best retail sales month of 2012. Retail volume was up 38 percent from November - about double the industry's estimated increase.

Incentive spending was competitive with industry-wide levels, according to J.D. Power esti-

mates, and remains below many Asian and domestic competitors.

"All four GM brands increased their sales year-over-year in December and we were strong across the board in cars, crossovers and pickup trucks," said Kurt McNeil, vice president of U.S. Sales Operations.

"We also achieved an important fuel economy milestone," he said. "In December, GM became the first U.S. automaker to sell more than 1 million vehicles in a single year that get an EPA-esti-

mated 30 mpg or better on the highway."

Total GM passenger car sales increased 14 percent compared with a year earlier. Crossover sales were up 2 percent and sales of trucks, which include pickups, vans and SUVs, were equal to a year before.

Compared with November, total car sales increased 18 percent, trucks 52 percent and crossovers 22 percent.

Combined mini, small and compact car sales were up 52

percent year-over-year driven by continued strong Buick Verano, Chevrolet Spark and Sonic sales; a 27 percent increase for the Chevrolet Cruze; and a 72 percent increase for the Chevrolet Volt.

Cadillac posted a double-digit year-over-year sales increase for the third consecutive month.

Cadillac passenger car sales increased 64 percent year-over-year as the all-new ATS and XTS continue to establish themselves in the luxury market.



Buick Verano

Year-over-year sales of the Chevrolet Silverado increased 6 percent and sales of the GMC Sierra were up 13 percent. GM

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Ford C-MAX

Ford Brand Stands Alone in 2012 With 2 Million U.S. Sales

Ford Motor Company's U.S. sales grew across the board in 2012, with cars up 5 percent, utilities up 7 percent, and trucks up 2 percent for the year.

Overall, the Ford brand ended 2012 with 2,168,015 vehicles sold - the only automotive brand to

top 2 million in U.S. sales.

"Ford finished 2012 strong, with retail sales showing improved strength as more customers returned to dealer showrooms," said Ken Czabay, Ford vice president, U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service.

"Ford's fuel-efficient cars and hybrid vehicles showed the most dramatic growth for the year, and we achieved our best year for commercial vehicle sales since 2008."

Sales of Ford's small cars were up 29 percent in 2012, with

316,006 vehicles sold, and overall car sales were up 5 percent in 2012, with 760,646 sold. Focus sales gained 40 percent during the year, and the all-new C-MAX continues its strong selling rate.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Chrysler Sales Break Through Record Barriers in 2012

Chrysler's sales winning streak continued in December 2012 as the automaker reported U.S. sales of 152,367 units for the month, a 10 percent increase compared with sales in December 2011 (138,019 units), and the group's best December sales mark since 2007.

The Chrysler, Dodge, Ram Truck and FIAT brands each posted year-over-year sales gains in December compared with the same month last year.

The FIAT brand's 59 percent increase was the largest sales gain

of any Chrysler Group brand for the month.

December marked Chrysler Group's 33rd consecutive month of year-over-year sales gains.

For the year, Chrysler Group sales totaled 1,651,787 units, up 21 percent compared with sales in 2011.

The Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Ram Truck and FIAT brands each recorded significant sales gains during 2012 compared with sales in the previous year. The Jeep brand's 13 percent sales increase in the U.S. helped push its global

sales to an all-time record in 2012. Seven Chrysler Group models set annual sales records in 2012.

"Chrysler Group ended 2012 on a strong note with December sales up 10 percent and our best December sales since 2007," said Reid Bigland, president and CEO - Dodge Brand and head of U.S. Sales.

"Looking back on 2012, we were again one of the fastest growing automakers in the country with total sales up 21 percent. We also recorded 33 consecutive months of year-over-year sales

growth and our strongest annual sales in five years.

"Finally, seven of our vehicles recorded their best-ever annual sales in 2012, demonstrating how the quality, design and fuel efficiency of our product lineup continues to resonate with consumers."

The all-new Dodge Dart, which just earned a Top Safety Pick from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, played a big role in Chrysler Group's 10 percent sales increase in December. Dart sales were up 36 percent from



Dodge Dart

November to December, the compact car's best monthly sales performance since it went on sale in June.

Also contributing to Chrysler

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Got News? Contact us at news@oaklandtechnews.com