

## Oakland Tech News

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We always like hearing from our readers, and the companies and businesses whose stories appear in this newspaper.

And, human interest stories appeal to all. If you've got a story to share, don't hesitate to contact us.

## Ram 1500 Earns Truck/Utility of Year

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

For 2013, the new Ram 1500 offers buyers best-in-class 25 MPG fuel efficiency, new technology and new features without sacrificing capability. Ram 1500 comes equipped with a choice of engines, including the legendary 5.7-liter HEMI V8 engine or the award-winning Pentastar V6, the Ram 1500 offers excellent powertrains in the industry.

The 2013 Ram 1500 features first-in-segment technologies: eight-speed automatic transmission, stop-start system, thermal management system, pulse-width modulation and active aerodynamics, including grille shutters and active air suspension. The 2013 Ram 1500 is available in nine trim levels and starts at \$23,585 including \$995 destination charge.

Ram engineers say they changed every area of the truck—from a newly designed frame to new engines and transmissions to a new interior with the next-generation Uconnect access system. With excellent ride and handling and aerodynamics, the 2013 Ram 1500 delivers great content, performance and capability to truck buyers, Ram spokespeople said.

To be eligible to win NAIAS truck or car of the year, a vehicle must be all-new or substantially changed. After considering dozens of vehicles this year, the jurors fi-

# Counties, Cities Use Salt Alternatives for Snow Removal

by Darrett Pullins

Winter always provides some of the most challenging driving conditions in Michigan. One of those challenges is snow.

What seems to concern drivers most is how quickly the snow is removed so the roads are drivable.

What goes into the removal of snow?

Of course, snow plows. But what about beet juice?

Beet juice probably conjures up a thought of a sticky substance, like sugar, which would do anything but melt snow.

However, the combination of salt and beet juice help to lower the melting point of ice, therefore facilitating the removal of snow by city and county road crews.

Fortunately for the state, Michigan is a major grower of sugar beets, which is used in the production of table sugar.

Unfortunately, according to Rochester DPW foreman Jack Crowley, although the product has been used the past few years, it's no longer economical.

This year, the liquid juice has reached \$4 a gallon, where the alternative eco-friendly product is about 90 cents a gallon.

Beet juice, a by-product of sugar production from the sugar beet, has a few applications, but none as beneficial to the auto industry as a product for helping in the reduction of corrosive salt on streets and roadways.

Those salts, when cars drive through, begin the destructive process of eating away at automobiles, cars, buses, and trucks, which eventually costs us.

Bill Bohlen, Rochester's director of Public Works, has been a

proponent of alternate methods of snow removal.

Last year, by Crowley's estimate, the city used 100 gallons of beet juice, in conjunction with calcium chloride, to facilitate snow removal.

The mixture of salt and juice were used on city streets when temperatures fell below 21 degrees Fahrenheit, as regular rock salt's efficacy falls off around that temperature.

The lack of snow last year did not allow the city to use the mixture much, but Bohlen estimates the usage of the beet juice and calcium chloride mixture re-

duced the use of salt by 15 percent for years 2010-2011.

Most of the surrounding counties, such as Macomb, Lapeer and Washtenaw, and even now the city of Rochester, use an alternative to beet juice.

Some county road crews use a combination of readily available calcium chloride, along with regular rock salt, to clear the roads. Other county crews use a new combination of salt and an environmentally friendly product to reduce salt usage.

The new mixture used on roadways is a proprietary derivative of vegetable oil.

## Auburn Hills Uses Michigan Beet Juice to Treat Snow

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The solution, which has a light brownish color, can remain on the roadways for up to two to three days, if there is not an interceding rain that would cause the solution to be washed away.

Auburn Hills actually is very proactive with respect to snow removal. On a day when snow is forecast, prior to that snowfall, the Department of Public Services springs into action.

A truck with 725 gallons of the beet and brine solution begins the process of pre-treating the dry roadways and intersections.

Dan Brisson, manager of Facilities and Roads for Auburn Hills, says, "Anti-icing prior to a snow storm helps to reduce the bonding effect of snow and ice to the pavement surface, thereby offering better traction and braking during the initial snowfall."

Having safer driving conditions is beneficial to both motorist and the city, as better control of the vehicle under hazardous conditions, could result in fewer accidents.

There are additional advantages

to Auburn Hills and all drivers with the city's use of beet juice.

Because this mixture has been in use the last two years, the city has had to use up to 30 percent less salt on the roads. Plus, not having to re-plow saves man-hours.

Also, less salt on the roads is

an advantage to the driving public, as cars are not subject as much to the corrosive characteristics of salt.

Other local Michigan communities have experimented with the beet juice and brine solution, and have had less favorable results.

## AH Library Offers 'How to' Courses

The Auburn Hills public library has some courses of interest for those looking to manage their money or simply learn how to keep an electronic photo album.

The class, titled, "My Money and Me (Part 2)," will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 29, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. in the main library's large meeting room. There is room for 15 attendees.

The class titled, "Organizing Digital Photos on Your Computer," takes place on Saturday, Jan. 26, between 2 and 4 p.m. in the large meeting room. There are openings for 22 people.

To register, visit the main library at auburn-hills.lib.mi.us, or call 248-370-9466.

## AH Mayor to Talk State of the City

Auburn Hills Mayor James McDonald will be giving the annual State of the Community speech on Thursday, Jan. 24, beginning at 9 a.m. in the Palace of Auburn Hills, 6 Championship Drive.

There will be a special continental breakfast and community expo prior to the speech starting at 8 a.m. The fee is \$45 for chamber members, \$50 for non-members. To register online, visit the Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce online at auburn-hillschamber.com. The Expo is sponsored by the Palace Come Together Program. Call Rachael Jay of the Auburn Chamber of Commerce at 248-853-7862 for more information.



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