

Industrial robots are in demand.

FANUC'S Cicco Cites Robots as Way to Re-Shore U.S. Jobs

by Jim Stickford

The year 2012 was a good year for robotics companies, and it's not just due to cars.

The Robotics Industry Association (RIA) trade group based

out of Ann Arbor recently issued a report stating that 2012 was the best year for the North American robotics market.

RIA president Jeff Burnstein said that was due, in large part, to the automotive industry.

When new models are introduced by OEMs, they tend to buy up a lot robotics systems, Burnstein said. In the last couple of years, OEMs have introduced a lot of new models, and they aren't going to slow down on the

introduction of new models anytime soon.

"The auto industry is the largest customer for robotics manufacturers," Burnstein said.

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Robotics Team Seeks Another National Championship

by Irena Granaas

The "Juggernauts" have completed the build phase of the annual worldwide robotic competition and are slated to enter their first local contest March 8-9 at Waterford-Mott High School in Waterford.

Otherwise known as FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Team #1, the Juggernauts represent Oakland Tech Northeast, Pontiac.

Volunteer mentor Mike McIntyre explained that a "juggernaut" is an unstoppable force, something team members are no doubt hoping their entry proves to be in upcoming regional and state contests, which would earn the team the right to compete at the national championship in St. Louis April 24-27.

The Juggernauts include about a dozen "travel team" members and about the same number of students who don't travel but play a vital role in building the robot and serving as tech support.

The Oakland Tech Northeast team is one of 19 high schools receiving \$6,400 grants this year from Chrysler. The grants help the teams offset costs associated

with items such as registration fees, parts and materials, and team apparel.

According to McIntyre, Oakland Tech Northeast has competed annually in FIRST Robotics since 1997, and in 1999 the Juggernauts were the world champions. This year, the robots have two main tasks.

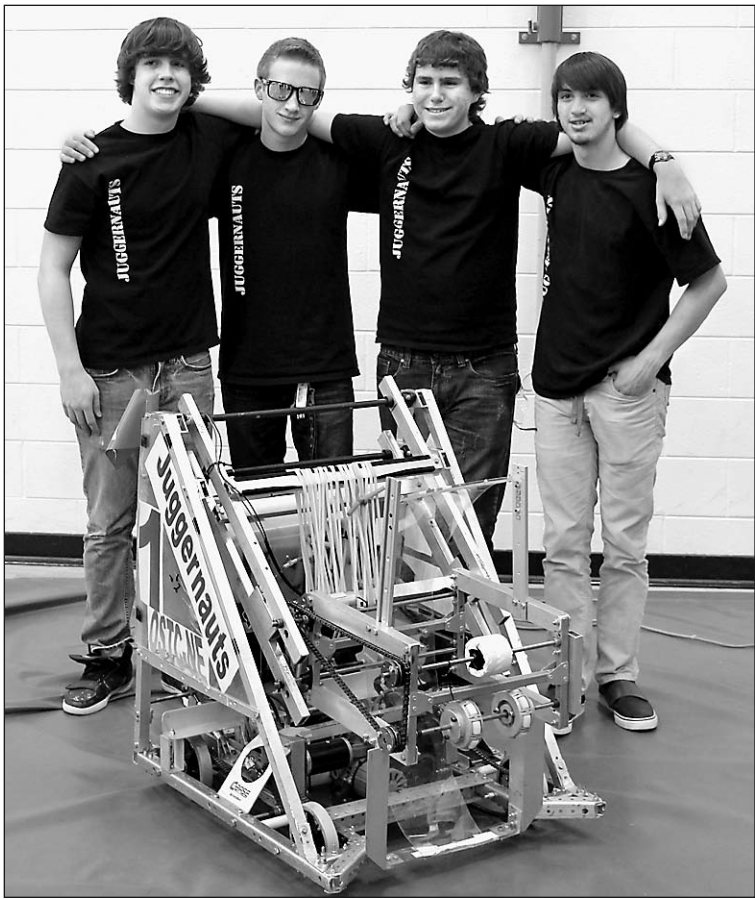
Each robot will have to successfully climb a tower called a pyramid and climb to at least five feet from the ground; and the robot will also be shooting Frisbees into a basket from 6 to 10 feet off the ground.

Although the team's competition robot is bagged and sealed as required by contest rules, McIntyre said the team continues to work on a second robot.

This will not only give team members something to do between competitions, but will enable drivers to practice driving a robot and will provide a source of spare parts for the competition robot.

He noted Chrysler is the primary team sponsor, with some additional financial support from BAE Systems and Hirotec America in Auburn Hills.

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Alex Fucich, Scott Kristian, Brett Opel and Kaleb Owens, the Juggernaut "Drive Team" and their 2012 robot.

Chevrolet SS Performance Gains Race Fans' Approval

GM's efforts to bring the upcoming Chevrolet SS to the attention of the American public in anticipation of its launch later this year got off to an early success.

The Team Chevy race teams and the Chevrolet SS race car earned five of the six top pole positions at the Daytona 500, which was run on Feb. 24.

Danica Patrick made history behind the wheel of the No. 10 GODADDY Chevrolet SS, winning the pole for the 55th running of the Daytona 500. Four-time NASCAR Sprint Cup Series (NSCS) champion Jeff Gordon powered the No. 24 Drive to End Hunger Chevrolet SS to second in the final order, giving the all-new Chevrolet SS the front row.

"We are so proud of Danica Patrick, Tony Gibson and the entire Stewart-Haas team on putting the No. 10 Chevrolet SS on the pole for the 2013 Daytona 500," said Jim Campbell, U.S. vice president Performance Vehicles and Motorsports. "Danica was focused and drove a great line to secure the pole. She gave tremendous credit to her entire No. 10 team for this accomplishment."

"She is a determined racer, a team player and we're proud to have her on Team Chevy."

The new Chevrolet SS production car will pace the Daytona 500, leading an all-Chevrolet



The Holden concept Commodore inspired the 2014 Chevy SS.

front row to the green flag.

Patrick's accomplishment marks the first time in the 64-year history of the NSCS that a woman will lead the field to the start of the Great American Race. Patrick's lap of 45.817 seconds – 196.434 – proved to have staying power as the remainder of the cars made their qualifying runs.

Team Chevy drivers who captured five of the top six qualifying positions were: Ryan Newman, No. 39 Quicken Loans Chevrolet SS (fourth); Tony Stewart, No. 14 Bass Pro Shops/Mobil 1 Chevrolet SS (fifth), and Kasey Kahne, No. 5 Farmers Insurance Chevrolet SS (sixth), giving each excellent starting positions for Thursday's Budweiser Duel at Daytona Qualifying Races.

Michelle Malcho, GM spokesperson for Volt, Chevrolet Mylink at GM, said the public reaction to the Chevy SS has been positive so far. She added that the press seems to like the vehicle as well.



The 2014 Chevrolet SS made its debut at the time trials at Daytona.

"The SS has been revealed in front of the fans," Malcho said. "They seem to like it, and it's the first time in a long time that what we race on the track will be available in the dealership."

The SS is based on the Holden VF Commodore out of Australia. Both vehicles use the GM Zeta platform. The vehicle is a rear-wheel drive performance sedan, the first GM has offered in 17 years, Malcho said.

The 2014 Chevrolet SS production sedan will be available in the

fourth quarter of 2013, with prices set closer to the on-sale date. Malcho said the price will be competitive with other vehicles in the segment, such as the Dodge Charger.

When it arrives in showrooms, the SS will join the Corvette and Camaro on the showroom floor, Malcho said.

The combined sales of these two vehicles, say GM officials, have already made Chevrolet America's favorite performance brand for the past two years.

Chamber to Talk Business Strategy

In its quest to meet the evolving needs of its members, the Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce has scheduled "Membership 101 and Your Strategic Plan."

Attending chamber members will learn about the benefits, services, resources and support available to members and their businesses.

During the second part of a two-part session, Kathryn Baker of Advicoach will give a briefing to introduce members to the one-page strategic plan, a simple tool designed to let business owners refine their vision and strategy down to a single, action-oriented page.

The session will be held on March 8, 9-11 a.m., at the Quality Inn in Auburn Hills, located at 1461 N. Opdyke Road.

Coffee and a light breakfast will be served. Members are asked to go to the chamber website and register online.

Series Will Teach Money Managing

The Auburn Hills Public Library plans a series of sessions on investing and money management entitled, "Money in the Balance," starting in March.

The five-part series will cover the basics of investing, managing assets and liabilities, examining your goals and needs, and finding the right financial service provider for you.

The dates are March 12 and 26; April 9 and 30; and May 14. Times are 6:30-8 p.m. for all sessions. The library is located at 3400 East Seyburn Drive in Auburn Hills.

This series is part of the state of Michigan's "Investor Education in Your Community" program, and is non-commercial in nature – no sales pitches. Register by calling 248-364-6706, or go to the library website events calendar to register online.

Defense Industry How-To Seminar

Automation Alley is sponsoring a defense opportunities seminar for business people interested in diversifying into the defense industry.

This event will focus on procurement opportunities within the defense industry, and will provide many resources to those attending.

Speakers include Jennifer Tisdale, procurement counselor, Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) of Schoolcraft College; Dan Raubinger, director, defense and manufacturing, Automation Alley; and Marie Gapinski, associate director, TACOM Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP).

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