

Golf Outing Nets \$10,000 For North Oakland YMCA

Chrysler logistics provider Insight Network Logistics (INL) Auburn Hills facility raised more than \$10,000 during its recent charity golf scramble event held at Westwynd Golf Course in Oakland Township.

This is the fourth annual charity golf scramble for INL, which also manages Chrysler's North American Finished Vehicle Distribution Network.

This year, more than 144 golfers participated.

"We had a full 36 teams, with two on each hole," said INS event organizer Sara Sanger.

The event was open to the community, but most participants were Chrysler personnel and people from Chrysler supply chain partners. The four-person scramble launched with a 1 p.m. shotgun start.

"Everyone really enjoys the opportunity to spend time with their fellow supply chain partners outside of the work environment," said Chip Savoye, INL director of Regional Operations. "What could be better than hav-

ing fun while at the same time helping out a great organization like the YMCA?"

Sanger described the weather as pleasant, "a little windy," but with temperatures in the low 70s.

"Everyone enjoyed the event and they enjoyed the course," she said.

Highlights included a Vegas hole, contests for the longest drive and closest to the pin, door raffle prizes and a silent auction.

"Thanks to the great response from our generous sponsors and local businesses, we had a lot of items for our silent auction," said Sanger.

Net proceeds from the event will benefit the North Oakland YMCA's Strong Kids Campaign, which provides scholarships and funding for preschool programs, summer camp and sports programs like Girls on the Run.

Sanger noted that, as one of the earliest North Oakland YMCA corporate members, the company wants to do its part to make the YMCA's programs available



From left, Nick Peterson, Steve Roberts and Al McCune.

to all members of the community. The North Oakland YMCA, located in Auburn Hills, is a branch of the Detroit Metropolitan

YMCA that has as its mission to support children and families throughout Oakland and Macomb counties.

Early Sales Are 'Encouraging' for Cruze Diesel

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with OEMs like GM, have been able to make the fuel and the engines burn cleaner. Bluhm agreed, saying GM worked hard to produce an engine that passes the United States' stricter emission standards.

Boisten said the Cruze's diesel engine produces more torque than many expect. This makes the Cruze "a fun car to drive."

And, Boisten said, today's diesel engine technology can save the consumer money in the long run because of fuel efficiency and the durability of the technology. Simply put, upfront higher costs are offset by two factors: one, the need to buy less fuel and, two, the fact that diesel vehicles retain residual value.

Part of the reason that Chevrolet decided to build a passenger diesel was in response to what other OEMs have been doing, Bluhm said. She said that VW has had diesel cars for a while and other OEMs are getting ready to enter the market.

And diesel engines are fuel-efficient, Bluhm said, adding that an engine such as the one the Cruze has will get 46 mpg on the highway, which is better than a lot of hybrid engines.

Bluhm said although it's too early to say just how successful the diesel Cruze will be, the first sales numbers are encouraging.

"The customers are trading in the exact types of cars that we expected them to," Bluhm said. "We're seeing a lot of Jettas and non-diesel passenger cars that were owned by people who have diesel trucks."

Bluhm said that diesel truck owners often have diesel passenger cars as well, but, until now, those who wanted to buy a diesel American car couldn't. The Cruze has changed that.

Huge One-Time AH Tax Levy Averted; Now 10 Years to Pay

by Irena Granaas

Auburn Hills representatives headed to Lansing recently to advocate for the city in its fight against a \$7.8 million tax levy.

The city and seven other communities are being forced to pay the amount, thanks to the Pontiac School District's default in making employee health insurance payments to the Michigan Education Special Services Association (MESSA).

Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Denise Asker, along with four others, traveled to Lansing seeking relief on avoiding the added tax levy, which for Auburn Hills businesses and residents is estimated to be about \$4 million.

While city advocates didn't get the school tax levy waived entirely, Auburn Hills residents and business owners will get significant relief on their summer tax bill thanks to their efforts.

"Just a few of us went and made some great strides on this issue," Asker said in a July 8 email. "Unfortunately, time was not on our side. Medicaid dominated the agenda.

"The result is that the City of

AH mailed out the tax bills last week, which included the assessment shared over 10 years instead of a one-time levy. While not the solution we fought for, it was the next best option."

"We were close on a couple of issues, but we couldn't get any of them across the goal line," agreed Auburn Hills City Manager Pete Auger in a separate interview.

Auburn Hills city and chamber officials continue to seek a long-term solution. Auger explained the situation came about recently when the MESSA sued the city of Auburn Hills and the other affected communities within the district for the money the PSD owes the health care insurance provider.

"Before that, the city was held not to be injured because the city didn't pay the tax, it just sent on the tax bills," Auger said. "When they sued us, that brought us into the picture."

The chamber and city officials have fought since to protect residents and businesses as they continue to seek a more permanent legislative solution. For example, in June, the Auburn Hills City Council voted unanimously to waive the administrative fee

the city is entitled to collect. Otherwise, that fee would accompany the payment of the tax levy.

Auger said the State Attorney General's office backed the efforts of Auburn Hills and several other communities to come up with a solution.

As a result of all these efforts, permission was granted by Oakland County Sixth Circuit Judge Martha D. Anderson for Auburn Hills and any of the other PSD communities to split the payments in 10 percent increments over 10 years if they so desired.

Auger said Auburn Hills, Orion Township and the city of Pontiac were among those who opted to pay in installments.

Auger said the city will continue to work with state legislators "to try to fix this loophole in the law so it doesn't occur to us or anyone else again.

"We will try to see that these children in the district are afforded an education like anyone else," he said.

As reported in this newspaper in April, the question went before the Oakland County Circuit Court, and a \$7.8 million judgment was rendered against the school district on behalf of the insurance carrier.



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