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Bill Mann and his 1970 Dodge Charger R/T

Mann's 1970 Dodge Charger Picked as 'Top Eliminator'

Mopar's 2013 "Top Eliminator" program has chosen New Jersey native Bill Mann's 1970 Charger R/T as a winner from the Carlisle Chrysler Nationals held in Carlisle, Pa., last month.

The long-running customized and performance vehicle program highlights passionate and dedicated Mopar enthusiasts who "display unmatched skill in modifying or preserving a classic or modern-day Mopar vehicle," said Tricia Hecker, head of Mopar Marketing.

Candidates were judged by a

panel of Mopar representatives on a number of criteria, including Mopar content, restoration and customization efforts, overall appearance and additional benchmarks.

In recognition for being named a Mopar "Top Eliminator", Mann's winning entry, a 1970 Charger R/T with a Plum Crazy exterior and white interior, was to be showcased in the Mopar display area at the Woodward Dream Cruise on Aug. 17.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

BAE's SH Facility Tops in Communications Developing Ground Combat Vehicles Main Focus, But Cutbacks Inevitable

by Jim Stickford

Recent federal budget problems could hit close to home, and even large defense contractors and the suppliers who serve them will not be immune to spending reductions.

That's the word from Mark Signorelli, vice president and general manager, Armored Combat Systems for BAE Systems.

Signorelli spoke to reporters at the company's Sterling Heights facility on Aug. 27. He said that BAE's Sterling Heights facility currently employs about 335 people and its primary activity is engineering, prototyping and program management for the company's Land and Armaments - Combat Vehicle Systems business, which is part of BAE's Armored Combat Systems.

The facility also provides support for the Armored Multiple Purpose Vehicle, the Bradley family of infantry fighting vehicles, the M88 Hercules, and the M109 Paladin Integrated Management vehicle. Employees at the facility also develop the next-generation Ground Combat Vehicle (GCV), whichever that is as time goes on.

The facility has its own quarter-mile test track, which is the closest track to the Army's TACOM facility down the road in Warren.

"This is a great facility," Signorelli said. "It's set up for flexibility and a distributed workforce," which he said in this case is a group of engineers who can communicate in real time with engineers at other facilities around the country.

Trying to move all the engineers to one facility, he said, would be costly.

So by having a modern site like the one in Sterling Heights, BAE Systems is able to take advantage of the company's expertise at other sites.

He said the days of specialization are here and that fighting ground vehicles now require experts in other fields to make them the best vehicles in the world.

Signorelli added that the building is modern in ways besides communications technology. It's energy-efficient and has become a "zero landfill" facility.

And the facility depends on 46 local suppliers to provide the material it needs for its research, Signorelli said.

"Many of our suppliers are small local businesses," he said. "There's a perception out there that small businesses that can serve as defense suppliers are plentiful and are like commodities - easily replaced. That's not been my experience."

"There are a lot of processes that small businesses have to go through to be defense suppliers and when we lose one, it's tough on our customers to find a replacement business."

"We want people to understand the challenges that go with starting and stopping vehicle development."

The businesses that BAE depends on might not be there in the military supply business in a few years when a production line might start again, Signorelli said.

"Unfortunately, I think cutbacks are inevitable," Signorelli

GM's Small, Compact Car Sales Escalating, Thanks to Technology and Millennials

Chevrolet's small and compact car sales are up 229 percent year over year from the second quarter of 2010 to the same quarter this year.

The jump is evidence of the brand's continuing success in attracting buyers of all ages, including millennials, whose purchase priorities include advanced technology, fuel economy, functionality and affordability.

Chevrolet's share of buyers under 35 continues to increase year over year, led by vehicles such as the Cruze, Sonic, and, most recently, the Spark mini car, said Annalisa Bluhm - Spark, Sonic and Cruze spokesperson for Chevrolet.

Leading the segment is the Cruze, which is among the top-selling Chevrolet vehicles to those under 25. One in four Sonic and Spark buyers are also under 25, while almost six in 10 buyers of those cars are new to Chevrolet.

"The opportunity this new generation represents is enormous," said Cristi Landy, Chevrolet marketing director, Small Cars and Electrified Vehicles.

"The only way for Chevrolet to deliver the products, technology and services they want most is



Chevrolet Sonic



Chevrolet Spark

to really listen to what is important in their lives today and help enable them to reach their full potential."

Part of this dialogue happens online through Chevrolet's social media channels. Successful online campaigns, including the Effie-winning Sonic "Let's Do This" campaign, propelled the Sonic to the forefront with young buyers, Bluhm said.

Chevrolet's newest campaign features the Cruze Diesel through lighthearted Vine videos on Twitter that last less than seven seconds each. Chevrolet is the first automotive manufacturer to use the Vine platform for an original advertising campaign.

Research shows that younger buyers rank vehicle technology among the top features influencing purchase decisions, Bluhm said.

Both the Spark and Sonic feature Chevrolet MyLink infotain-

ment systems powered by smartphones, including apps such as BringGo Navigation, Pandora, Tune in and Siri in Eyes Free Mode, which helps them stay safely connected at a fraction of the price of in-dash navigation.

Chevrolet dealers also play an important role in helping to better understand the wants and needs of the younger buyers.

By providing access to resources such as credit, dealers are helping to make the process of purchasing a car easier, Bluhm said.

"Nearly four in 10 millennial buyers are purchasing within the compact car segment," said Dora Nowicki, Chevrolet Sonic Marketing director.

"As a brand, we recognize the importance of partnering with next-gen buyers and engaging with them before, during and after purchase."

GM Foundation Contributes to MLK Memorial

The General Motors Foundation has donated \$50,000 to the National Park Foundation to help fund the 50th anniversary commemoration of the historic 1963 March on Washington and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech.

The Foundation grant, said Marie Mainville, manager of GM Foundation Corporate Communications, helped bring the events of Aug. 28 on the National Mall to people across the nation and around the world.

A mass march along the historic Aug. 28, 1963, route ended at the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. President Obama last week addressed the nation from the very spot where Dr. King delivered his speech 50 years ago during the "Let Freedom Ring" ceremony.

About 100,000 people attended this year's event.

"The GM Foundation believes that Dr. King's dream of equality and peace is just as powerful and resonant a half-century later," said GM Foundation President Vivian Pickard.

"We proudly support these events in the hopes that future generations will continue to be inspired by Dr. King's vision and message."

General Motors and the GM Foundation have been longtime supporters of Dr. King's vision of diversity and inclusion through support of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial, including contributions of more than \$10 million to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Foundation since fundraising for the monument began in 2006.



The Bradley M2A3 combat vehicle at BAE's Sterling Heights test track

said. "We've managed to 'fix' the 2014 budget, but there are problems with 2015, 2016 and 2017. I don't think we've seen the impact of sequestration just yet, but when we do, the impact will be compounded."

Deepak Bazaz, who is leading the design and development for the GCV for BAE Systems, said the GCV is part of a modernization thrust by the U.S. Army.

The military has learned a lot about what works in modern combat over the past decade, he said, and the BAE engineers would like to see that hard-earned knowledge in new vehicles.

Bazaz said the Bradley infantry fighting vehicle goes back to the 1980s and that the military would like the GCV to carry a squad of nine instead of the Bradley's seven and provide better protection from IEDs and other anti-vehicle weapons.

Bazaz said the GCV is now in the technology development stage, which is followed by the engineering and manufacturing phase.

SAE uses what Bazaz calls a "hotbuck" system to test the various components such as drivetrain, engine and such. By using a dynamometer, the engineers can test systems before combining them into a prototype platform. Bazaz would like to see the GCV use some sort of electric-hybrid technology.

Signorelli said the Sterling Heights facility is a modern site that uses the latest technology to create the systems American warfighters need to protect the country.

Right now, budget cuts are inevitable, he said, but hopefully they will be done in a way that won't unduly harm the way technology is developed to protect soldiers.