

After 80 Years, GM Chorus Still Hits Sweet Note for Members

Milestones are to be celebrated, and this year, the General Motors Chorus, which is based in Macomb County, will be celebrating 80 years of existence.

"Eighty years young and we're still going strong," said Bill Pillar, a GM retiree and first tenor in the chorus.

He said what distinguishes this group of singers is its membership. Over time, the choir has evolved to become more of a community-based group, which still touts its GM heritage.

"I like music and I like to sing, and I really enjoy the people in the chorus," said John Bober, a GM retiree who has been part of the choir for more than 20 years.

"The ensemble is much more like a paternal organization than a music group because there's so much camaraderie between us."

Records show that the chorus was originally formed in 1933 as an employee chorus that primarily performed at GM-sponsored events.

Though the chorus is no longer affiliated with the company, its primary purpose has changed and is now focused on servicing the community with music.

Each year, the chorus gives about 25 concerts at local churches, senior centers, veterans' hospitals and other public venues. But not only that, because the choir is focused on giving to the community, it is committed to providing financial and technical assistance to high school students seeking to pursue higher vocal programs.

"It gives me a good feeling to



The GM Chorus gives about 25 concerts a year at local churches, senior centers, and veterans' hospitals.

know that we're serving the community and bringing joy through the power of music," Pillar said.

He added that he's been with the group for about 30 years now.

The chorus performs a wide variety of music, including classical, spiritual and popular pieces. In 2003, the chorus produced its first CD, consisting of chorus favorites in commemoration of their 70th Anniversary.

Bober is one of the choir's composers. He's written and arranged a number of pieces that the choir has performed over the years.

"I just try to put something together musically, that Norman Rockwell would put to a canvas when he's painting. Music is a beautiful art form," Bober said.

In 1993 and 1999, the chorus was asked to sing backup for Grammy-winning vocalist Judy Collins.

"That was a real experience for us," Pillar said. "It's amazing to think of all the things we've been able to accomplish, all of which have been member-driven."

He said the group has created a name for themselves in Southeast Michigan. They've performed alongside a number of local symphonies, have participated in benefit and charity events, as well as sung for many civic and community groups.

The membership ranges from year to year, and has been as many as 100 people strong. For the past 30 years, the chorus has

sustained its operations by patron donations, member dues and "free-will" offerings from its audiences.

Pillar said he hopes to get more GM employees and retirees involved.

The chorus is about to assemble for its fall season starting with practices in early September on Monday evenings at 6:45 p.m. in Lincoln High School (just east of Van Dyke and south of Nine Mile).

"We're really excited about this next era of the chorus," Pillar said.

To find out more about the chorus, visit www.gmchorus.com.

New-Vehicle Sales Continue Positive Growth Trajectory

The new-vehicle sales pace in September has slowed slightly from its sprint in recent months, according to a monthly sales forecast developed jointly by J.D. Power and LMC Automotive.

Volume is impacted by fewer selling days and the absence of Labor Day from September tallies.

New-vehicle retail sales in September 2013 are projected to come in at 933,400 units, a 2 percent increase from September 2012.

Retail transactions are the most accurate measure of true underlying consumer demand for new vehicles. The seasonally adjusted annualized rate (SAAR) in September is expected to be 12.4 million units.

"Although the year-over-year sales gain in September is smaller than has been observed in recent months, it's important to recognize that September's reported sales are being heavily influenced by a quirk on the industry sales calendar," said John Humphrey, senior vice president of the global automotive practice at J.D. Power.

"When combined, August and September retail sales are expected to be up 10.6 percent, compared with August and September 2012, which underscores the continued positive trajectory in growth and overall health of the industry," said Humphrey.

Stop-and-Go? This Car Does It for You

How'd you like someone else to drive your car for you in stop-and-go traffic?

Some folks say that's how GM's full-speed-range adaptive cruise control, available on the 2014 Chevrolet Impala, feels for them.

All drivers have to do, say GM officials, is set the control on a following gap that they choose — one car length, two car lengths, or three. If the car starts to close that gap, the brake is automatically applied.

In a public statement, GM said the control can help reduce the number of repeated stops and starts during every day commuting, which can be stressful for drivers.

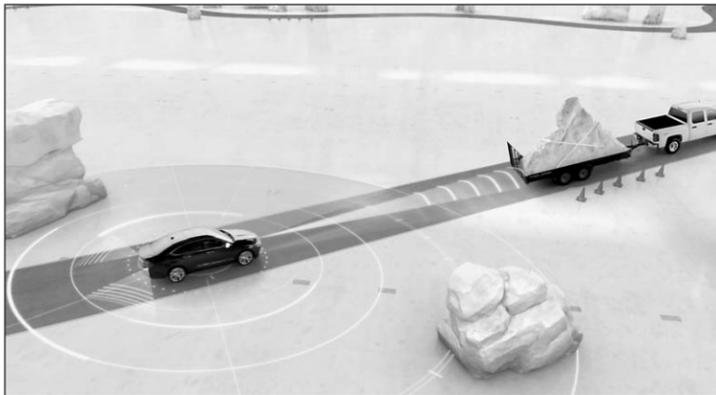
General Motors and the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute conducted a large field test in 2005 in cooperation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, using Impala's Adaptive Cruise Control at speeds above 25 mph.

"Results indicated that brake-apply rates were 25 times lower under freeway conditions relative to manual driving," said James Sayers, a research scientist in the institute's human factors group.

"These results suggest that Adaptive Cruise Control can substantially reduce the workload and stress associated with the everyday task of car following," he said.

The redesigned flagship sedan is the first Chevrolet to offer this technology.

The Adaptive Cruise Control addresses the repetitive task of braking and accelerating by way of a cruise control system that allows the driver to maintain a



Rendering of the benefits of Impala's adaptive cruise control

driver-selected following gap with the vehicle ahead, said GM spokesman Chad Lyons.

Unlike regular cruise control, the full-speed-range adaptive cruise control system uses forward-looking radar to let the driver choose one of three gaps at which to follow the car ahead, Lyons said.

These gaps adapt to the cruise speed selected, so a larger distance between cars at a higher cruise speed is provided. The adaptive cruise control system can automatically accelerate and brake the vehicle up to moderate levels to maintain the driver-selected gap, and can even work under stop-and-go traffic conditions, such as automated toll booths.

Adaptive cruise control still requires the driver to pay careful attention to traffic and road conditions and override the system when necessary by manually accelerating and/or braking, Lyons said.

Two other Impala features help avoid or reduce the damage caused by crashes.

Forward collision alert warns the driver when he is approaching a vehicle ahead too quickly or if he is following much too closely, Lyons said.

Crash imminent braking, available with the ACC package, can intervene to automatically apply the brakes, such as when a driver fails to respond quickly enough to Forward Collision Alert warnings.

Other available features on the Impala that can help the driver become aware of possible crash hazards include:

- Lane Departure Warning;
- Side Blind Zone Alert;
- Rear Cross Traffic Alert;
- Rear Vision Camera;
- Ultrasonic Rear Part Assist.

GM's statement said the new Impala recently received the highest possible 5-star Overall Vehicle Score for safety as part of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's New Car Assessment Program, and has one of the most comprehensive collections of standard and available safety features in its segment.

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