

## Detroit Auto Scene

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## Trigui Appointed Executive VP, Chief Technology Officer at DURA

Nizar Trigui has been appointed executive vice president and chief technology officer for DURA Automotive Systems, a supplier company based in Auburn Hills.

Trigui, most recently serving as global chief engineer of Sustainable Mobility for Ford, will lead all DURA new product development, Advanced Engineering and Innovation Activities.

In the newly created executive position, Trigui reports directly to DURA CEO Lynn Tilton.

"Creating a culture of innovation in both product and process that provides vision and competitive advantage to our customers will be the lifeblood of the new DURA organization," said the DURA CEO.

"We are delighted that Mr. Trigui has joined our team as chief technology officer.

"In a world of rapidly evolving technology," she said, "his extensive experience and insights will enhance execution of the bold initiatives set forth for the coming years by our executive leadership."

Before joining DURA, Trigui served for more than 20 years in advanced technology and product engineering leadership positions with Ford and its affiliated brands in North America and Europe, said DURA spokesperson Sean McGuire.

## Chrysler Copies Human Lung Design to Improve CNG Tanks

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) powered vehicles have great potential as a way to power motor vehicles, said Chrysler spokesman Eric Mayne.

But there are problems, he said.

While CNG has a per-gallon-equivalent cost advantage of approximately \$1 compared with gasoline, its energy density is less by volume. As a result, CNG-powered vehicles require larger fuel tanks to deliver range that is comparable to that of gas- or diesel-powered vehicles.

Current CNG tank designs also

are limited to cylindrical shapes to accommodate the pressure at which the gaseous fuel is stored, Mayne said.

To get around this engineering problem, Chrysler is looking to the human body for inspiration to design the next generation of fuel tanks powering CNG vehicles, Mayne said.

"Within the human lung are countless individual sacks called alveoli," says Enrico Pisino, Chrysler Group's senior manager - Innovation. "These sacks combine to expand the lung's total air capacity. We are using this same approach to improve the packaging of CNG tanks."

Simply put, Mayne said, developing new CNG tanks using this technology allows engineers to fit the tank into space available on the vehicle in question, instead of having to find or design space on the vehicle around cylindrical tanks.

"By studying the human body and how it works, Chrysler engi-

neers are able to design a CNG vessel of any shape that still has the functionality of the traditional cylindrical shape."

Chrysler Group's work is supported in part by a \$50,000 grant from the Michigan Economic Development Council's Technology Innovation Challenge, which matches companies with Michigan-based strategic partners to accelerate advanced-technology initiatives.

Chrysler Group's patent-pending technology addresses both issues by expanding tank capacity and enabling designs that conform to the vehicle, as do other fuel tanks. The result is a no-compromise solution that preserves space intended for passengers and/or cargo.

When asked how far away this technology is from the marketplace, Mayne said that the company has a patent pending.

"You can draw your own conclusions," Mayne said.

Chrysler Group already has a

CNG vehicle on the market, Mayne said. The Ram 2500 Compressed Natural Gas truck is the industry's only factory-built CNG-powered pickup, rolling off the same assembly line as conventionally powered vehicles.

Available for retail and fleet sale, the Ram 2500 Compressed Natural Gas truck features a 5.7-liter HEMI V8 engine that burns CNG. When that fuel is depleted, it automatically and seamlessly switches to gasoline, Mayne said. On a single fill-up, the truck can travel 255 miles on CNG and 745 miles when equipped with an available 35-gallon reserve gas tank.

Chrysler Group has a long history with CNG, Mayne said. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the company produced dedicated CNG-powered full-size vans, minivans and pickup trucks.

Chrysler Group's strategic partner, Fiat S.p.A., is a world leader in CNG-powered vehicle production, Mayne said.



Nizar Trigui

Since 2007, Trigui led the corporate sustainability strategy, developing and implementing strategic plans and enabling technologies for Ford products globally.

His efforts yielded major improvements in the global product fleet's environmental footprint, showroom competitiveness, and brand-favorable perception.

Trigui holds B.S., M.S., and Ph. D. degrees in Mechanical Engineering from The Ohio State University.

"DURA's commitment to investing in technological innovation as a means to create new market opportunities is unsurpassed," said Trigui.

"It is a rare opportunity to work with such a great executive, advanced manufacturing, and technology team.

"I look forward to creating a bolstered innovation agenda that will serve our customers for the future."

## Used Car Prices Drop as New Car Sales Rise

Used car prices have hit their lowest levels in four years, says a recent report issued by Edmunds.com.

The data suggests that the used car market is finally softening after years of notoriously elevated prices.

According to Edmunds.com's Used Car Market Quarterly Report, the average price of a used car sold by franchise dealers in the third quarter of 2013 was \$15,617.

The average price was 2.8 percent lower than in the previous quarter, and 0.9 percent lower than in the third quarter of 2012.

The last time used car prices ran so low was in the third quarter of 2009, when the price of an

average car sold at a franchise dealership was \$14,808.

"Now that the new car market has hit its stride, buyers are no longer drawn to used cars the way they have been in recent years," says Edmunds.com's Director of Used Car Analysis Joe Spina.

"Used car prices will likely continue to decline in the coming months simply because there will be more of these vehicles sitting on dealer lots."

While softer prices are a good sign for used car buyers, the Edmunds.com report points out that prices still are relatively higher than they were before the recession.

Average used car prices crossed the \$15,000 threshold for

the first time at the end of 2009, and have remained above that level ever since.

At their peak, used car prices averaged \$16,473 in the second quarter of 2011.

Shoppers looking to score the best deal on a used car, according to the Edmunds.com report, may want to take the time to consider brands such as Volvo, GMC and Chevrolet.

Vehicles produced by those three automakers sat on used dealer lots longer than any other brand in the third quarter.

At the other end of the spectrum, says the report, Japanese brands such as Honda, Toyota and Lexus likely carried the most elevated prices.

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