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GM Gift to Help Tell African American Story

The General Motors Foundation will become a founding donor of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture through a \$1 million grant.

GM Foundation President Vivian Pickard presented the gift to Museum Founding Director Lonnie G. Bunch III at the Washington, D.C., Auto Show on Jan. 22.

"GM and the GM Foundation have a strong legacy of support for the African American community, and for the Smithsonian Institution's preservation of our nation's history," said Pickard.

"Through this grant, we continue our commitment by helping to

bring to life the story of African Americans who have changed our nation in so many ways."

Currently under construction on a five-acre site adjacent to the Washington Monument, the museum will open in 2015, displaying the richness and diversity of the African American experience and how it has shaped the country. The GM Foundation's donation will support the design and installation of the Museum's permanent exhibitions.

"We are honored to have the GM Foundation join the museum's family of founding donors, supporting us as we create a better America, one museum at a

time," said Bunch. "GM's gift will help the museum tell a rich, inclusive history of America, one that will now be preserved for generations to come."

The GM Foundation joins other prominent donors, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, The Oprah Winfrey Charitable Foundation, American Express and more, said foundation spokesperson Maria Mainville.

With this pledge, GM and the GM Foundation's support of the Smithsonian totals more than \$11 million since 1998.

The Foundation was also a

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Lonnie G. Bunch III at Washington Auto Show



Special edition 'Altitude' models of the, from left, 2014 Cherokee, Grand Cherokee and Wrangler.

Naming Contest Evolves into Special Edition Jeep Altitudes

You never know where a good idea is going to come from. Just ask the folks at Jeep.

New special edition "Altitude" models of the 2014 Cherokee, Grand Cherokee and Wrangler were introduced Jan. 22 at the Houston Auto Show.

Featuring unique "blacked-out" exteriors with a distinct and aggressive flair, the vehicles arrive in Jeep showrooms this spring – thanks to a positive consumer response from earlier

Jeep Altitude models, said Chrysler spokesman Todd Goyer.

Two years ago, Jeep introduced a production-intent concept Grand Cherokee at the Houston Auto Show, and connected with customers to name the model, Goyer said.

More than 100,000 entries were submitted by Jeep enthusiasts, with Altitude emerging as the winning vehicle name. The

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Michigan Needs to Feed the Manufacturing Job Pipeline

by Jim Stickford

It's the ultimate contradiction.

A recent survey by The Manufacturing Institute in Great Britain reported that 82 percent of Americans think the country should invest more in manufacturing, but only 35 percent would encourage their children to go into manufacturing as a career.

Chuck Hadden, president and CEO of the Michigan Manufacturer's Association, related the survey results while speaking at the "Solving the Manufacturing Tal-

ent Shortage With Proven Training for the Workforce" seminar held at the M-TEC facility on Van Dyke in Warren Jan. 22.

The event was attended by local manufacturers who learned about how they could employ and sponsor training for graduates and students at M-TEC and other training centers in the state.

M-TEC is a joint effort between the state and Macomb Community College (MCC) to provide technical training in the manufacturing sector.

Hadden said his organization has 2,200 members, 85 percent of which employ fewer than 100 people.

Their products include automotive, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, furniture, electronics, food and beverages, metals, plastics and biochemicals. Overall, they employ more than 560,000 people.

"Right here in Michigan, we are manufacturing the best products in the world through an increasingly deep use of technology and advanced skills to create high-

quality, cost-competitive products," Hadden said.

"Nationally, for every \$1 spent in manufacturing, another \$1.48 is added to the economy, the highest multiplier effect of any sector and nearly three times the rate of industries like retail and wholesale trade."

Between December 2009 and November 2013, Michigan's manufacturing sector created more than 100,000 new jobs, ranking first in the nation and outpacing

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Chuck Hadden

2014 Will be 'The Year of the Lease Pull-Ahead, Led by Buick,' Says Swapalease.com Vice President Hall

by Jim Stickford

There are a lot of advantages for manufacturers to offer lease pull-ahead programs and it looks like Buick is going to be the leader of the lease pack for 2014.

Or at least that's the prediction of Swapalease.com.

Scot Hall, executive vice president, said his company creates an online lease transfer marketplace, so if someone has six months left on his or her car lease wants, for some reason, to get rid of it, he or she can go to the site and transfer the lease to someone who wants a short-term lease.

The reasons people do this are many, Hall said. Someone might move to another city where a car isn't needed. Or someone might move to a city where a car is needed. Some people just like short-term leases. They don't want to be locked in with the same car for three years.

Hall said Swapalease's prediction that 2014 will be the "year of the lease pull-ahead" is based on a few factors.

First, he said, lease pull-ahead programs are used by manufacturers and dealers to entice lease drivers into turning in their leases early in order to "re-lease" another vehicle.

It's a forgiveness opportunity on what's remaining on the contract, usually offered to lessees with fewer than five months remaining on the contract.

Manufacturers such as BMW, Ford and Lincoln utilized lease pull-ahead programs in 2013, and several other manufacturers, such as GM, may be planning aggressive lease pull-ahead programs for 2014.

These programs are beneficial to the industry, Hall said, as they help turn new inventory and elevate brand retention among consumers. Hall added that Swapalease.com predicts there



2014 Buick LaCrosse

will be roughly 20 percent more lease pull-ahead program options in 2014, particularly as a result of an expected three million leases scheduled for return in the coming year.

"Swapalease.com is an advocate of lease pull-ahead programs, and the company's 'lease transfer' marketplace pioneered the flexible lease contract option nearly 15 years ago," said Hall. "Today, thousands of lease drivers use the service as a way to escape their current contract in

order to immediately turn around and shop for a different vehicle that meets their new automotive needs."

Hall said Swapalease has put Buick at the top of lease pull-ahead programs for 2014, based on GM's history with pull-ahead programs.

He said those programs are "great ways for OEMs to maintain market share or even grow it." And, over the past couple of

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Patti to Upgrade Marlette Firm

Patti Engineering, a maker of control system integration, has released details of a control system upgrade project in progress.

Its team of Siemens engineers is providing services to Oetiker's U.S.-based manufacturing facility in Marlette, Mich.

The project consists of upgrading equipment with the latest Siemens Simatic S7 control platform. This offers technological and economic advantages, said Patti Marketing Director Georgia Whalen.

Oetiker's investment in migrating equipment controls to the S7 control platform will ultimately improve plant efficiency, said Whalen, adding that the machine downtime will be reduced and the machines' functionality, maintainability, and scalability will be greatly improved.

"Oetiker is proactive in upgrading our equipment to best support our customers," said Bruce Christensen, Oetiker U.S.'s production manager.

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