

House Members Ask Why Ignition Switch Recall Took GM So Long

By MARCY GORDON and TOM KRISHER
AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) – House members questioned whether the culture at General Motors could truly change, and whether the dismissal of 15 employees was enough, as they grilled CEO Mary Barra about the actions she's taken since GM admitted that it failed to act on a deadly safety issue for more than a decade.

A House subcommittee heard testimony June 18 from Barra and attorney Anton Valukas, who recently completed an internal investigation on GM's mishandled recall of 2.6 million Chevrolet Cobalts and other cars.

Panel members wanted to know why it took GM so long to recall the cars, which have defective ignition switches. GM blames the switches for at least 13 deaths, but Rep. Diana DeGette, a Colorado Democrat, said she thinks there could be up to 100 deaths associated with the problem.

Lawmakers sought reassurances that GM will act faster in the future, and provided evi-



GM CEO Mary Barra

dence that the Cobalt recall wasn't the only one where GM was slow to take action.

Rep. Fred Upton, R-Mich., read a 2005 e-mail from a GM employee who was driving a 2006 Chevrolet Impala that stalled because the ignition switch unexpectedly slipped out of the "run" position. The employee suggested a "big recall" should be conducted and recommended that the part be made stronger. But the 2006 Impala wasn't recalled for the problem until this week.

Upton asked Barra what GM would do with such an e-mail if it was sent today. The CEO said if GM determined the stalling happened because of a problem with a car part, "then we'll take immediate action." She said this

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Chrysler's TorqueFlite 8-Speed Transmission Brings Fuel Savings, Emissions Reductions

Fuel savings and emissions reductions attributed to TorqueFlite eight-speed transmissions are adding up to substantial gains for Chrysler Group customers, said Chrysler spokesman Eric Mayne.

The advanced-technology automatics – first of their kind ever made available to mainstream-brand customers – now are powering more than one million vehicles worldwide, said Mayne.

And their combined effect is staggering, he said.

Over their lifetimes, vehicles equipped with TorqueFlite eight-speed transmissions are projected to save their owners more than 700 million gallons of fuel, compared with their predecessors that featured five- or six-speed automatics, said Mayne. That quantity of gasoline is worth approximately \$2.5 billion at the pump, based on current fuel-price forecasts, he added.

The effect will also reduce combined CO2 emissions by more than six million metric tons, Mayne said.

The modern TorqueFlite was put into development back in 2008, when Chrysler officials "saw the writing on the wall" and realized that at some point in the future the government was going to demand better mileage from

all automakers, said Mayne.

"We looked at things like lightweighting, and downsizing and came to the conclusion that the best way to go was improving the transmission and the axle," Mayne said.

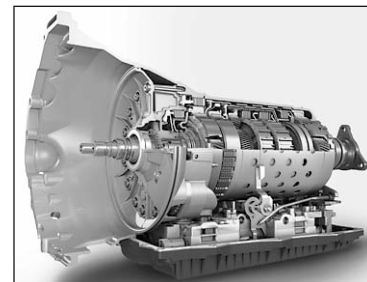
"The problem of parasitic power loss could be best addressed by improving those technologies. That was the beginning of the development of the eight-speed transmission."

Chrysler named the new eight-speed transmission TorqueFlite as a way to honor the company's history.

"We first used the name TorqueFlite back in the 1950s," Mayne said. "The technology may have changed, but what TorqueFlite represents – superior technology giving superior performance and greater efficiency – that hasn't changed, so we used the name again."

TorqueFlite eight-speed transmissions in model-year 2014 vehicles also contribute to 19 Chrysler fuel-economy or driving-range benchmarks across four vehicle segments.

"This is precisely the kind of impact we targeted with the TorqueFlite program," said Jeffrey Lux, vice president and head of Transmission Powertrain.



TorqueFlite 8-Speed tranny

"And we fully expect this momentum to continue as we expand availability."

Starting in model-year 2015, the TorqueFlite 8HP70 transmission can be paired with Hemi-equipped Dodge Chargers, Challengers and Challenger SRTs, Lux said.

When the TorqueFlite 8HP45/845RE made its debut in model-year 2012 as the world's first eight-speed available outside the luxury market, the transmission was mated exclusively to Chrysler's award-winning 3.6-liter Pentastar V6 in the Charger and Chrysler 300 lineups, Mayne said.

Since then, the TorqueFlite 845RE and 8HP70 have migrated, respectively, to Pentastar- and HEMI-powered versions of the

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J.D. Power Quality Study: Six GM Vehicles, Three Ford, Two Chrysler Top Categories

by Jim Stickford

GM took away honors in the recent J.D. Power Initial Quality Study with six vehicles finishing first in their individual categories.

Three Ford vehicles topped their categories, while Chrysler had two wins.

"This is a big change from earlier years," said Dave Sargent, vice president, Quality Practice at J.D. Power and Associates.

"It used to be that Honda and Toyota were the big winners. But in the past few years, that hasn't been the case. This year, they had only one vehicle apiece win a category."

The study's figures were released June 18 at a special Automotive Press Association event held at the Detroit Athletic Club.

Sargent said the ratings are for model-year 2014 vehicles only and the figures came from the 86,000 new car buyers who responded to the half-a-million survey requests that J.D. Power sent out.

Overall, J.D. Power looked at 32 different brands covering 207 different models. GM was the big winner with six vehicles finishing atop their individual categories.

The GM winners are:

- Midsize Car – Chevrolet Malibu;
- Small SUV – Buick Encore (tied for first with Kia Sportage and Nissan Juke);
- Compact SUV – GMC Terrain;
- Large SUV – Chevrolet Suburban and GMC Yukon (tied for first);
- Large Heavy-Duty Pickup

Truck – Chevrolet Silverado HD.

Ford had the F-150 LD place tops in the Large Light-Duty Pickup category. The Edge finished first in the Midsize SUV category and the Lincoln MKX was in the Midsize Premium SUV slot.

Chrysler's two wins were the Town & Country in the Minivan category and the Dodge Challenger in the Midsize Sporty Car category.

These rankings are important for a couple of reasons, Sargent said. First, once a buyer decides on what category of vehicle he or she is going to buy, "expected reliability" is the number one reason they pick a particular vehicle in that range.

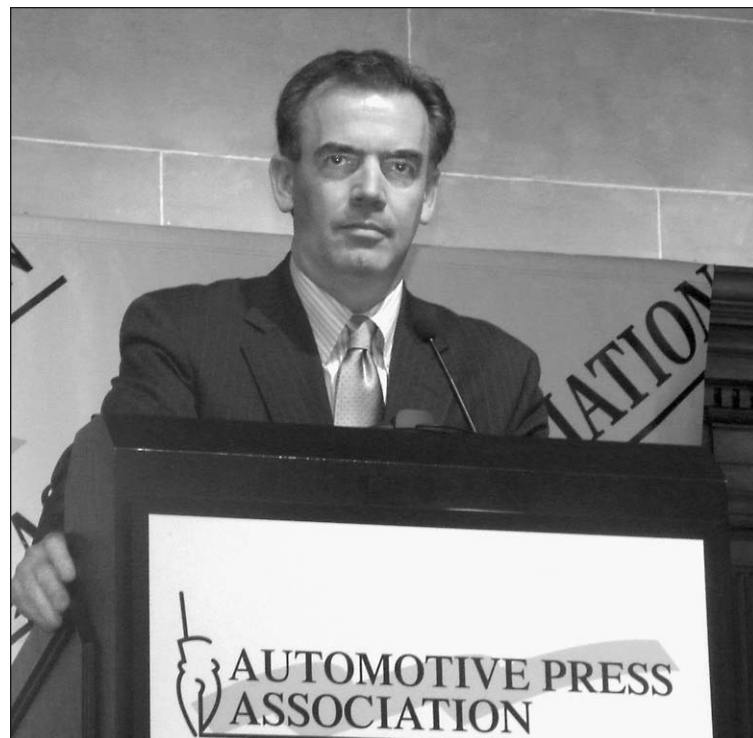
Second, automakers are able to use these numbers to see how they are doing relative to the

competition. "It used to be that when we gave automakers our numbers their reaction would be 'how dare you,'" Sargent said.

"That was when there were little fiefdoms of people deciding what figures to give the executives. Now we're most likely going to present our findings directly to the executives. The more current reactions are 'you got us.'"

Right now, Sargent said, automakers tend not to be surprised by J.D. Power figures because their internal controls and measurements are so much better than in the past. They tend to use the J.D. Power figures, he said, as a way of benchmarking where they are in the industry

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Dave Sargent of J.D. Power gives this year's quality rankings.



Ed Rinke Chevrolet used car manager Dave Wallace

GM Used Car Values Increase Despite 44 Vehicle Recalls

By TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) – Consumers looking for a used vehicle aren't shying away from GM models – even though more than 20 million GM cars and trucks have been recalled this year.

General Motors cars such as the Chevrolet Malibu have retained or increased in value, sometimes more than rival vehicles. And sales of new cars aren't slowing either, up 13 percent in May.

GM has issued 44 recalls in North America this year for parts

ranging from ignition switches to air bags. The most serious is for ignition switches in 2.6 million small cars linked to more than 50 crashes and at least 13 deaths. Investigations into that recall have exposed GM as a company that was too slow to react to serious safety issues.

In the past, consumers punished automakers for big recalls. Those companies lost market share – Toyota's dropped 2 percentage points over 12 months when it recalled 14 million cars for unintended acceleration. Yet

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House Members
Ask Barra About
Recall Delay

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week’s recall of 3.4 million large cars was an example of how the company now reacts.

But lawmakers said they need to know more, and were skeptical of some of the conclusions in Valukas’s 315-page report, which was paid for by GM and made public on June 5. The report found that a lone engineer, Ray DeGiorgio, was able to approve the use of a switch that didn’t meet company specifications, and years later, ordered a change to that switch without anyone else at GM being aware.

“The report does not answer all the key questions. It does not fully explain how the ignition switch was approved without meeting specifications and then redesigned in 2006,” said DeGette.

The ignition switch in Cobalts, Saturn Ions and other cars could move out of the run position because of a heavy keychain or a bump of a knee, GM has said. That causes the engine to stall, and cuts off power-assisted steering and brakes, and also disables the air bags. Valukas found that GM engineers failed to consider stalling a safety issue.

Others took years to make the connection between the switches and the air bag non-deployment. Valukas said a culture that prevented information sharing and discouraged people from taking action on problems was partly to blame.

Lawmakers were still left to wonder about the origins of those issues.

“It does not fully explain why stalling was not considered a safety issue within GM. And most troubling, the report does not fully explain how this dysfunctional company culture took root and persisted,” DeGette said.

DeGette said senior executives, including Barra, should have acted sooner to change the company’s culture.

She also said she has heard there is “more paranoia” within the company since Valukas’s report was published because employees are worried that they will lose their jobs.

Barra confirmed GM has dismissed 15 people connected with the recall and has initiated a safety review that has led to a record 44 recalls of 18 million cars in the U.S. so far this year.

But Barra said she is also encouraging people to speak up about potential safety issues and is rewarding – not punishing – those who do. She said she is already getting emails from employees reporting safety concerns.

“I never want anyone associated with GM to forget what happened,” Barra said in her prepared remarks. “This is not another business challenge. This is a tragic problem that should never have happened and must never happen again.”

GM Recalls 1.6M More Cars with Ignition Switch Defects

General Motors will rework or replace the ignition keys on about 3.16 million 2000 to 2014 model year cars in the U.S. because a situation exists that is similar to the recent ignition switch recall.

In the latest recall, the 3.16 million cars are subject to the ignition switch inadvertently moving out of the “run” position if the key is carrying extra weight and experiences some jarring event.

The use of a key with a hole, rather than a slotted key, said GM spokesperson Jim Cain, addresses the concern of unintended key rotation due to a jarring road event, such as striking a pothole or crossing railroad tracks.

Only one of the models included in the U.S. recall of 3,160,725 cars is still in production – the previous-generation Chevrolet Impala, which is sold to daily rental fleets as the Impala Limited.

The total North America population involved in the recall – in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and exports – is 3,360,555, Cain said.

The safety recall follows a review of ignition issues following the recall in February of 2.6 million Chevrolet Cobalts and other small cars. GM is aware of eight crashes and six injuries related to this latest recall.

If the ignition switch moves out of the “run” position, there is an effect on power steering and power braking. In addition, the timing of the key movement out of the “run” position, relative to the activation of the sensing algorithm of the crash event, may result in the air bags not deploying.

The cars being recalled are:

- 2005-09 Buick Lacrosse;
- 2006-14 Chevrolet Impala;
- 2000-05 Cadillac Deville;
- 2007-11 Cadillac DTS;
- 2006-11 Buick Lucerne;
- 2005 Buick Regal LS & GS;
- 2006-08 Chevy Monte Carlo.

In these vehicles, the ignition switch may be unable to handle extra weight hanging on a slotted key, Cain said.

GM will add an insert to the ignition keys of the recalled vehicles to close the slot and leave a 4x6-millimeter hole through which the key ring could be attached.

In vehicles where the key cover has been worn, new keys with holes instead of slots will be provided free of charge.

Rework of the keys – adding key inserts – at GM dealerships is expected to begin in the next few weeks.

Until the rework or replacement is completed, owners of the recalled cars are urged to remove additional weight from their key chains and drive with only the ignition key.

In addition to the ignition key recall, Cain said, GM also announced U.S. recalls for 165,770 vehicles in these five actions:

- 68,887 model-year 2013-14 Cadillac ATS and 21,863 model year 2014 Cadillac CTS sedans. In certain vehicles with automatic transmissions, the shift cable may not be fully secured to the shifter bracket or transmission bracket.

If the shift cable comes out of the brackets, the driver may not be able to shift the transmission in or out of gear.

GM is unaware of any crashes or injuries related to this condition.

- 57,192 units of the 2015 Chevrolet Silverado 2500/3500 HD and 2015 GMC Sierra 2500/3500 HD to inspect for proper attachment of power steering hose clamps to the power steering pump.

If the vehicle is driven with the clamp unattached, the hose may disconnect from the pump or gear, causing a rapid loss of power steering fluid.

This will result in loss of power steering assist and Hydro Boost powered brakes without warning. The vehicle would revert to manual brakes and manual steering.

GM knows of no crashes or injuries from the condition. Dealers are to inspect power steering hose clamps in two locations to ensure they are properly attached.

- 16,932 model-year 2011 Cadillac CTS sedans with AWD. On some vehicles, a gasket leak where the constant velocity joint meets the rear propeller shaft may cause the rear propeller shaft to separate or become loose, making contact with the vehicle floor above and causing the rollover sensor to deploy the roof rail air bags.

GM is aware of 15 unintended deployments, but injury data is unclear.

- 712 model-year 2014 Chevrolet Corvettes with optional Competition Sport Seats, because an unbelted child and door trim may block the passenger seat side air bag vent in a deployment.

Dealers will replace the current air bag with a redesigned version.

GM is unaware of any crashes or injuries related to this condition,



Key with hole replaces slotted key.

tion, but advises customers to not allow small children in the front seat until the vehicle is serviced.

- 184 model-year 2014-15 Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra full-size pickups with vinyl floors and accessory all-weather floor mats purchased new with the vehicle.

The mats can slip under the driver’s feet because the vinyl floors have no attachments to secure them in place. Customers are advised to take the floor mats to their dealer for a full refund.

GM is unaware of any crashes or injuries related to the mats.

GM expects to take a charge of up to approximately \$700 million in the second quarter for the cost of recall-related repairs announced in the quarter, Cain said. This amount includes a previously disclosed \$400 million charge for recalls announced May 15 and May 20.

Chrysler Investigated in Ignition Probe

DETROIT (AP) – A U.S. safety agency has opened two investigations into Chrysler minivans and SUVs as part of a widening inquiry into air bag and ignition switch problems across the U.S. auto industry.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration began asking automakers and parts suppliers for information on the inter-related issues after General Motors recalled 2.6 million small cars with faulty ignition switches earlier this year.

After the GM recalls in February and March, NHTSA asked auto companies and parts makers for information on switches and how long air bags will inflate after the keys are moved out of the “run” position to “accessory”

or “off.” In many cases, the answer is less than a second.

That led to the Chrysler inquiries, NHTSA said in a statement. “The agency examined all major manufacturers’ air bag deployment strategies as they relate to switch position,” the agency said in a statement. “NHTSA will continue to refine its knowledge of these systems.”

On June 18, NHTSA posted documents on its website detailing an investigation of about 700,000 Dodge Journey SUVs and Chrysler Town and Country and Dodge Grand Caravan minivans from the 2008 to 2010 model years. The agency wants to see if the keys can fall out of the run position under “harsh roadway conditions.”

Prodded by NHTSA, Chrysler recalled 2010 models of the same vehicles due to the problem, but did not recall those from earlier model years. NHTSA said 23 drivers complained, but it had no reports of crashes or injuries.

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Movie Crew Transforms Work at GM Sites

by Jim Stickford

Hollywood came to Warren one year ago for the filming of the latest "Transformers" movie.

Director Michael Bay took his movie crew to the GM Tech Center in June of 2013. He used the lobby of the Design Center Building as a stand-in for CIA headquarters. The office of GM's vice president of Design Ed Welburn was even turned into the office of the director of the CIA.

GM spokesperson Cristi Vasquez said the filming took place mostly at night, so GM's operations weren't disrupted.

Welburn said that in addition to using his office, scenes were filmed in the Design building's virtual reality room, which is used in real life for communications between GM design studios around the world.

Welburn has been invited to the New York premiere of "Transformers: Age of Extinction," and he intends to go.

"I have been looking forward to seeing the movie for a long time now," Welburn said. "We've had a strong relationship with Michael Bay going back to the first 'Transformers' movie and during that time I've gotten to know him well."

Welburn said that he and others at GM do more than give up their offices for filming.

"Michael came right into my office and we talked about the movie and we talked about our cars and which ones could be characters in the film."

Bay told Welburn that each car he would use would be a character and its look had to reflect its personality in the film.

The character, Bumblebee, was first seen in the first "Transformers" movie, Welburn said. It was a concept car at the time and Bay wanted to see it.

But Welburn told him that before Bay could see the car, Welburn had to know more about the movie. They went back and forth until Welburn finally "gave in" first.

But for the latest "Transformers" film, Bay wanted Bumblebee to be more powerful, bolder and



Bumblebee shows a new attitude in the latest Transformer movie.

more dynamic. As a result, GM worked with Bay's team to create a special Bumblebee that exists only in the film.

"Bumblebee is an autobot and the autobots are the good guys," Welburn said. Other autobots include a Corvette Stingray and a Chevy Sonic.

"And because the 'Transformers' are global films, we got to use more of our global products, like the Sonic.

"Being a part of the 'Transformers' franchise is an incredible way to showcase the design work of which GM is capable."

Welburn's relationship with Bay is so positive that Bay gave him a small part in the film.

"They were filming in our Design dome," Welburn said. "I got to come in and yell at Mark Wahlburg. We did about eight or 10 takes. If you know me, you know I'm not a yeller, so the first two or three takes weren't very good. Michael kept asking me to get angrier."

As he got better, Welburn said, one line kept having more words added to it. And it was interesting, he said, trying to hit a mark and walk around an autobot that would be added to the shot later digitally.

In addition to filming at the Tech Center's aerodynamic wind

tunnel and its climate wind tunnel, Bay used the GM Milford Proving Ground for some shots that in the movie take place on a highway. Some filming was also done at GM plants in Lansing.

"It was like the circus came to town," Welburn said. "They brought in trucks and more than 200 people to film here. And the Design building houses 900 people, but we managed to keep out of each other's way and we both got our work done. Now and in June of 2013, GM was so busy that we couldn't afford to stop work while they filmed. They promised not to interfere and they didn't."

Chrysler's New TorqueFlite Transmission Makes Mark

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Dodge Durango, Ram 1500 and Jeep Grand Cherokee lineups. The 8HP70 also serves EcoDiesel versions of the 1500 and Grand Cherokee.

With the introduction of the 2015 Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat, the TorqueFlite transmission family adds its third member – the 8HP90 high-performance automatic that affords greater torque capacity than any eight-speed previously offered by Chrysler, Mayne said.

Depending on the application, a TorqueFlite transmission can account for fuel-economy improvements of up to nine percent, compared with a more conventional automatic.

"The TorqueFlite's wide 7.03 ratio spread is the reason it can deliver such superior performance," Lux says. "This enables engines to operate at peak efficiency in a broader range of driving conditions."

The TorqueFlite family shares these gear ratios – 4.71, 3.14, 2.10, 1.67, 1.29, 1.00, 0.84 and 0.67.

Particularly close from fifth through eighth, the gear ratios also improve refinement by accommodating smoother shifts, Lux said.

In addition, the 4.71 first-gear ratio contributes to the kind of quick throttle response cus-

tomers want and enjoy, he said.

Fully electronic, the TorqueFlite family's software adapts the transmission's shift patterns to driver behavior and driving conditions such as:

- Longitudinal and lateral acceleration;
- Grade steepness;
- Temperature;
- Electronic stability control activation.

The TorqueFlite's design inherently contributes to efficiency. Paired with the 5.7-liter Hemi V8 in the 2015 Dodge Challenger, it weighs just four pounds more than the five-speed gearbox it replaces while contributing to a fuel-economy gain in the range of five percent.

Internally, the transmission features four gear sets and five shift elements consisting of multi-disc clutches and brakes. Only two shift elements are open at one time, which reduces drag losses stemming from the rotation of multiple parts, Mayne said.

Lower viscosity transmission fluid is used to improve operating efficiency and fuel economy, especially during cold environments or vehicle start-up, Lux said.

The TorqueFlite also is "fill-for-life." That means, Lux said, that it never requiring oil changes, when subjected to normal driving conditions.

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Despite Recalls, Used GM Cars' Values Rise

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

GM's has held fairly steady so far, around 18 percent.

GM has cautioned that an ongoing companywide safety review could produce even more recalls – just last week it recalled another 3.4 million cars for a separate ignition switch issue – so consumers might still decide to buy their cars elsewhere.

But for now, experts say, GM has retained buyers' confidence by appearing to act quickly on safety matters – even though GM's internal investigation into the small-car switch recall showed that employees took years to realize they had a safety problem on their hands.

"People are associating that with being vigilant more than being careless," said Larry Dominique, president of ALG, formerly Automotive Lease Guide, whose data is used by dealers to set values of leased cars.

That could explain why the value of the 2010 Chevrolet Malibu rose almost 3 percent from February, when the recalls started, through May, according to ALG. That compares with mid-size cars as a whole, which dropped in value by 1 percent. The Malibu has been part of five recalls this year. The value of most other used GM cars also rose. The exception: the Chevrolet Cobalt, which is at the heart of the first ignition switch recall.

About 1 million Cobalts are being recalled. Of the 13 deaths GM counts, nine occurred in Cobalts.

Dave Wallace, used car manager at Ed Rinke Chevrolet in Warren, said that so far GM used cars are holding their value well, especially premium vehicles.

ALG says the value of 2010 Cobalts dropped 2.4 percent from February through May, but the compact car segment's value rose almost 3 percent. Falling values have triggered lawsuits from Cobalt owners. That doesn't mean the cars won't sell. At L.A. Sales in Oyster Bay, N.Y., part-owner Andy Kaufman recently sold a 2005 Cobalt for just under the \$5,000 he was asking. The buyer, he says, had no concerns once Kaufman showed him the switch had been replaced.

Experts say the volume of recalls has taken away some of the fear factor.

"I'm beginning to wonder if the consumer is almost numb to the next headline that comes out," says Ricky Beggs, a senior vice president of Black Book, which also monitors used car prices.

The GM headlines keep coming. Last week, GM recalled older large cars for an ignition problem, although GM says the cause in this one is the key design. On June 6, the company said 15 people had been dismissed in relation to the findings of its internal investigation into the small-car switch problem. Even if con-

sumers do become sensitive to the recalls, any new-car market share decline would be small, predicts Jesse Toprak, senior analyst with the Cars.com website.

“They can mitigate it with some targeted marketing efforts” and discounts, Toprak said.

Consumers seemed more sensitive in the past. A decade ago, Firestone recalled about 6 million defective tires on Ford SUVs, and the automaker replaced another 10 million. Ford's share of the SUV market fell 5 percentage points. One important difference is that the recalled small cars – the Cobalt, Saturn Ion and Sky, Pontiac G5 and Solstice, and Chevy HHR – are no longer made. GM's newer cars score higher in quality surveys.

CCS Students Design Their Vision of 2030 Model Buicks

It's been said that the best way to learn is by doing and that's just what students at Detroit's College for Creative Studies (CCS) did, thanks to Buick and BASF.

Buick partnered with BASF to sponsor a competition for CCS students, who were given a blank canvas to shape their vision of what new Buicks will look like in 2030.

More than a dozen next-generation transportation designers answered the call to compete and consult with industry professionals.

"Exploring their own outside-the-box ideas and new concepts in personal transportation, students brought their visions to life in 3D with scale-model Buicks," said Buick spokesman Nick Richards.

"The solutions these concepts offer are as unique as the future car designers at CCS who created them," said Andrew Smith, executive director of Buick global design.

"For Buick, this project is an invitation for new insights and interpretation of our brand and the future portfolio of products we will offer."

The competition guidelines addressed future transportation needs – the dramatic rise in urban populations, developing countries, nanotechnology and the role advanced materials will play in vehicle efficiency.

A professional jury of Buick designers from the exterior, interior, and color and trim studios, along with BASF coatings and performance materials experts, selected four concepts for special recognition and \$7,000 in awards:

- Namsuk Lee, 28, from Seoul,

Korea, with two awards - \$3,000 for best overall concept and \$1,500 for best interior;

- Sam Kenny, 22, of Greensboro, N.C. - \$1,500 for best exterior design;
- Justin Salmon, 19, of Boca Raton, Fla. - \$1,000 for most innovative use of materials.

The panel commended Lee for his lightweight exterior form language, exceptional interpretation and integration of the Buick design cues and inviting interior execution.

Kennys' concept impressed the Buick designers, who praised its "dynamic elegance" and clever use of structural design elements to create innovative and efficient proportions and body surfacing.

Salmon won over the BASF jurors with his integration of materials and technology, including exposed use of algae in the vehicle structure to generate energy.

Other notable designs included the proportions and form language of the urban coupe by JinYoung Yoon and the dynamic concept from Soohan Cho. The latter was cited for expressive use of materials and colors to appeal to a young generation of Buick customers.

The Buick-BASF program is unique in that it allows young designers the same access to future trend research and data used by industry professionals, said Richards.

Students showcase their overall design talent through sketching and modeling, along with critical thinking and presentation skills.


Mentors from both companies provided information and access to advanced materials.


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Tommy Johnson, Dodge Charger R/T Win Bristol NHRA

Don Schumacher Racing driver Tommy Johnson Jr. drove his Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T to the team's first Funny Car win of the season at the 14th annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Thunder Valley Nationals at Bristol Dragway on June 15.

"This is third time I've won on Father's Day," said Johnson after earning his 10th career win. "I love the fans, the sound of Thunder Valley. There's nothing like it. This is a great facility. It was a tricky racetrack today, and all the guys on my team did a great job."

"And it makes it even better to associate with Make-A-Wish and raise awareness for them, it's just great. We just let everyone know what great things they do for these kids that are fighting life-threatening illnesses. To see them smile when they're going through tough things warms my heart and now we got them a win."

"All of us at Mopar would like to offer congratulations to Tommy Johnson Jr. on the win in Bristol," said Pietro Gorlier, president of Mopar.

"The Mopar-powered Funny Car package has been strong and it's great to see it back in the winner's circle. We look forward to seeing Tommy and his Don Schumacher Racing teammates contending for more wins in honor of the 50-year legacy of the 426 Race Hemi."

To get to the final elimination, Johnson defeated Cruz Pedregon and Robert Hight, only to be paired with his Mopar teammate Matt Hagan.

The Hemi-powered duo treated fans to an exciting semifinal showdown won by Johnson with a 4.201 second (299.46 mph) elapsed time run to a 4.207 second (293.54 mph) pass by the Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T.

Johnson then took the victory over Tim Wilkerson to leapfrog the Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T four spots into third place in the championship points race.

In stark contrast to the Funny Car win celebrations, disappointment reigned in the Mopar Pro Stock camp as crowd favorite Allen Johnson, who has yearned for an elusive win at his home track for the last 14 years, saw his hopes dashed once more in the first round of eliminations.

Johnson conveyed his disappointment, explaining why his "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart veered toward the centerline in a loss to Dave Connolly.

"When I left the starting line, it was pretty decent in first gear and then it started chattering the left tire and pushing me over there," Johnson said.

"If you make a big correction, you kill a lot of e.t., so I was trying to ease it back but never could get it to take hold."

"Then it made one big move and I was getting ready to relive Gainesville from a few years back (where he had a spectacular accident) if I had stayed in it. I thought, you know what? There's another race next week."

In 2012, Johnson missed winning on home turf by less than .0000 of a second against Mike Edwards in the closest race in NHRA history, but went on to win the NHRA Pro Stock championship that season.

While he's hoping that scenario perhaps might repeat itself, this weekend's loss will still sting.

"It's going to be sweet to win it one of these days," Allen Johnson said. "We'll keep after it. Next year, we'll work hard at it again and one day it will be our day. Today just wasn't."

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All appointments were effective June 10, 2014. All other directors continue in office.

GM, Ford, Chrysler Vehicles Top J.D. Power Quality Study

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and to see how other companies are doing.

The top problems for 2014 are the same as 2013, Sargent said. Buyers expressed frustration with voice recognition technology that doesn't work as well as it should. He said it's been "bedeviling" manufacturers, but the technology will get there someday.

Consumers are also bothered by Bluetooth connectivity issues, materials scuffing or soiling too easily, excessive wind noise and navigation systems being too difficult to use.

Overall, Detroit is doing well, Sargent said. The brands of Chevrolet, Lincoln, Chrysler, Cadillac, Ford, GMC and Ram are ranked above the industry average of 116 problems reported per 100 vehicles made.

GM has also done well, Sargent said, and it doesn't appear that the recall problems are affecting the company right now.

"Recalls are generally a poor way to gauge quality," Sargent said. "When Toyota had its troubles in 2010, they were able to ride them out, in part, because the company had 25 years of having a quality reputation."

GM doesn't have that. But the public understands that all car companies will have vehicles recalled, and that unless a recall is over a problem that a driver has himself encountered, the public tends to tune it out.

Also, Sargent said, there seems to be a sense that the recalls are from products that came from the "old" GM.

"It doesn't hurt that a lot of the recalls are for vehicles that GM no longer makes," Sargent said.

"Someone looking at a Malibu isn't going to worry about a problem with the Cobalt, which went out of production years ago."

Rankings changed this year, Sargent said, because automakers launched a lot of new models. It often takes a year to work out any kinks in a new product. He credits Dodge for really improving the Dart.

"The changes they made weren't things that would have been noticed by the public," Sargent said. "The car looks the same, but they fixed things like how the car is manufactured."

He credits Lincoln for working out a lot of the human machine interface (HMI) problems that consumers have complained about.

"Ford really took one for the team," Sargent said. "They were the first automaker to really start putting in new communications technology into their vehicles. They showed what worked and what didn't work. Ford, as well as a lot of other automakers, were able to learn from Ford's mistakes."

Another change Sargent said he's seen over the years has been the greater transparency in the vehicle development process. In the old days, cars were developed by "people in separate silos." Engineering didn't talk to manufacturing and they didn't talk to marketing who didn't talk to design.

"If I had to note one thing that's changed in the last decade, it's the decline of the head engineer," Sargent said. "It used to be that if a customer and the head engineer had a different opinion on something, the head engineer was always right."

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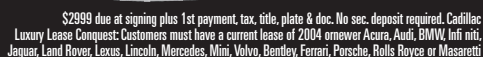
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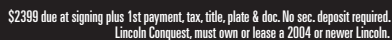
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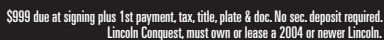
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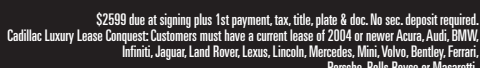
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Volt Exceeds EPA-Rated EV Miles Range

Since the launch of the Chevrolet Volt in late 2010, its owners have accumulated more than half-a-billion all-electric miles.

Additionally, based on a General Motors' study of more than 300 Volts in service in California for more than 30 months, many owners are exceeding the EPA-rated label of 35 miles of EV range per full charge, with about 15 percent surpassing 40 miles of range.

"The fact that most of the folks who purchased the Volt at launch are still enjoying EV range performance on target with when they took delivery is testament to the attention to detail our team paid to delivering on our promise of most people driving all electrically most of the time," said Pam Fletcher, Chevrolet Volt executive chief engineer.

GM EV spokesperson Kevin Kelly said this information "is a big deal" because Volt owners are doing more than 63 percent of their overall driving in EV mode.

While the driving range in EV mode can be greatly impacted by temperature, driving technique and terrain, the ease with which Volt drivers are avoiding gasoline use further shows the Volt's suitability for almost any lifestyle, he said.

"The most common question we got when we introduced the Volt back in late 2010 was about the batteries," Kelly said. "People wanted to know about how long they would last and what kind of performance they could expect from them."

"Now, we have records of 30 months of service that allows us to demonstrate that these batteries are reliable and durable and lives up to the promise of a range

of at least 35 miles."

In fact, Kelly said, the information GM has seen has shown that the batteries have actually exceeded the engineers' expectations.

"You're always on the conservative side when setting limits," Kelly said. "We had some expectations on how customers would use the vehicles."

"We are seeing that some customers will drive the battery down to zero and then let the gas engine kick in to generate power. We've seen that the Volt has saved two-and-a-half-million gallons of gasoline since its introduction. That's enough gas for Washington, D.C. for two-and-a-half months."

Volt owners who charge regularly typically drive more than 970 miles between fill-ups and visit the gas station less than

once a month, Kelly said.

The 2014 Volt provides owners with fuel economy of EPA-estimated 98 MPGe (electric) and 35 city/40 highway on gasoline power, saving \$1,450 in annual fuel costs with no change in daily driving habits.

In an independent study conducted between July and December 2013, Volt drivers who participated in the Department of Energy's EV Project managed by Idaho National Labs totaled 1,198,114 vehicle trips of which 974,692, or 81.4 percent, were completed without the gasoline-powered generator being used.

The Volt continues to attract new buyers to Chevrolet with 69 percent of Volt buyers new to GM, Kelly said, pointing out that the Toyota Prius is the most frequently traded-in vehicle for a Volt.

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NHTSA Says: Stop Texts, Stop Wrecks

With school out for the summer, high school students will be driving to jobs, to friends' homes, to the beach. And, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, all this driving can be hazardous to teens' health if they combine it with texting.

NHTSA has launched its annual campaign warning drivers in general and teens specifically about the dangers of texting and driving.

More than 3,000 teens die annually from texting while driving, compared to about 2,700 for driving under the influence of alcohol, according to a 2013 study by Cohen Children's Medical Center in New Hyde Park, N.Y..

In its campaign, NHTSA stated that five seconds is the average time your eyes are off the road while texting. When traveling at 55 mph, that's enough time to cover the length of a football field.

Additionally, NHTSA noted that engaging in visual-manual subtasks (such as reaching for a phone, dialing and texting) associated with the use of hand-held phones and other portable devices increased the risk of getting into a crash by 300 percent.

NHTSA stated that 11 percent of all drivers under the age of 20 involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crash. This age group has the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted, and that 49 percent of drivers with cell phones under the age of 35 send or read text messages while driving.

To combat the urges to text and drive, NHTSA has several suggestions. First, put the cell phone away - out of sight, out of mind.

Second, silence the ringer. Third, use apps that stop drivers from driving and texting. Finally, if a driver has passengers, name one as the designated texter.

Big 3 Pledge \$26M To Help DIA and City of Detroit

General Motors and the General Motors Foundation, along with Chrysler and Ford Motor Company, last week joined in giving a collective pledge of \$26 million toward the “Grand Bargain” campaign to help both the Detroit Institute of Art (DIA) and the City of Detroit.

GM and the GM Foundation are contributing a total of \$10 million – \$5 million each – of the auto industry’s \$26 million pledge, said GM spokesperson Helen Rosenker, which is part of the DIA’s commitment to raise \$100 million to help Detroit emerge from bankruptcy and protect the museum’s art collection for the public.

“Preserving the integrity of Detroit and one of its most beloved and historic pillars is of the utmost importance to GM and the GM Foundation,” said Mark Reuss, GM executive vice president, Global Product Development, Purchasing and Supply Chain and GM Foundation vice chairman.

“We are longtime supporters of the DIA and pledge our help to keep it an integral part of our community.”

The Ford Company Fund donated \$10 million. Chrysler donated \$6 million, said DIA spokesperson Pam Marcil.

“Ford has long been committed to the DIA and the vital role it plays in making our city and region unique,” said Ford’s Joe Hinrichs, executive vice president and president, The Americas.

“As Detroit rebuilds for the future, we are proud to continue our support of the DIA and its part in the city’s recovery efforts.”

Said Chrysler Chairman and CEO Sergio Marchionne, “While it is our duty to focus on the revival of this city, it is equally crucial to cherish the treasures the city already offers – not just for ourselves, but for the generations that will follow.

“The Detroit Institute of Arts is a cultural treasure that enriches the human spirit, while offering us a chance to contemplate what humanity has achieved and what we aspire to create in the future.”

DIA Board Chairman Eugene A. Gararo, Jr., added, “On behalf of our entire DIA board of directors, our Director Graham Beal and all other members of our DIA family, we are extremely pleased and appreciative of this remarkable financial commitment by the leadership of our corporate community.”

The Grand Bargain was proposed by the mediators of the city’s bankruptcy and led by Chief Judge Gerald Rosen of the U. S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, and attorney Eugene Driker.

Museum Displays ‘Mirrored’ Ford

AUBURN, Ind. (AP) – A north-eastern Indiana auto museum is displaying a rare stainless steel Ford dating to the 1930s that’s so shiny it’s considered a “mirror on wheels.”

The Ford Tudor Deluxe Touring Sedan that’s on display at the Early Ford V-8 Foundation Museum in Auburn is one of only six 1936 stainless steel cars produced for the Allegheny Ludlum Steel Co. by Ford Motor Company.

Only four of the six cars are known to survive.

The vehicles were originally raw, unpolished stainless steel. But this car has been polished to a high sheen.

The car was loaned to the museum by Joe and Elaine Floyd of Harrisburg, S.D.

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2015 Corvette Z06 Trots Out 650 Horsepower Engine

It's one thing to talk the talk, but when it comes to horsepower, the 2015 Corvette Z06 supercharged LT4 V8 engine more than walks the walk.

The Z06 powerplant has been SAE-certified at 650 horsepower.

That means, said GM spokesman Tom Read, that the 2015 Corvette Z06 is the most powerful production car ever from General Motors and one of a few production cars available in the United States that delivers more than 600 horsepower.

Read said the Z06's LT4 supercharged 6.2L V8 engine is SAE-certified at 650 horsepower at 6,400 rpm and 650 lb.-ft. of torque at 3,600 rpm.

"The LT4 Small Block sets a new benchmark for power and torque at GM," said Steve Kiefer, vice president, GM Powertrain Engineering.

"The engine also puts the new Corvette Z06 on par with the most powerful supercars offered in America, while delivering performance with impeccable manners that make it suitable for daily driving."

Compared with other supercar engines, Kiefer said, the LT4 is a veritable fountain of low-end torque, producing 457 lb.-ft. just off idle and 625 lb.-ft. by only 2,800 rpm.

The V12-powered Ferrari F12 Berlinetta, for example, produces about 28 percent less torque than the Z06, despite offering about 12 percent more horsepower – and its peak torque isn't achieved until 6,000 rpm. The

LT4 maintains 90 percent of its peak torque, or 592 lb.-ft., from 2,500 to 5,400 rpm.

The new LT4 engine eclipses the Porsche 911 Turbo S engine's peak power levels by 90 horsepower and 134 lb.-ft. of torque, said Kiefer.

"Torque is the pulling power of an engine and the LT4's abundance of it at every rpm in the engine's speed range helps the 2015 Corvette Z06 accelerate quicker and respond nearly instantaneously," said Jordan Lee, chief engineer for GM's Small Block engines. "It's the very definition of power on demand."

The new Z06 engine, Lee said, produces 40 percent more peak torque (180 lb.-ft.) than the previous-generation's 7.0L LS7 engine – and 7.5 percent more than the supercharged 2013 Corvette ZR1's 604 lb.-ft.

At 3,200 rpm, the new LT4 surpasses the LS7 by 208 lb.-ft. of torque. On the horsepower side of the graph, the LT4's 650-hp rating is 29 percent greater than the LS7's 505 horsepower, and 12 horses more than the ZR1's LS9 engine. "The new LT4 engine builds on the design strengths of our previous supercharged engine," said Lee, "and leverages the technologies introduced on the Corvette Stingray – direct injection, cylinder deactivation and continuously variable valve timing – to take Corvette performance to an all-new plateau.

"Our new, very compact supercharger also helps the engine make power more quickly, and,

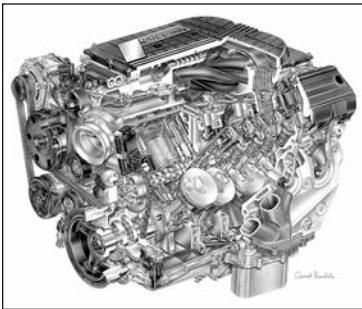
perhaps more importantly, it helps produce more torque earlier in the rpm band.

"It's also worth mentioning that the LT4's supercar performance numbers are achieved with an engine that is nearly the same size as the very compact LT1 engine introduced in the 2014 Corvette Stingray. The power density of the LT4 makes it one of the smallest and lightest 650-hp engines in the industry."

The new LT4 engine is based on the same Gen 5 small block foundation as the Corvette Stingray's LT1 6.2L naturally aspirated engine.

It incorporates several unique features designed to support its higher output and the greater cylinder pressures created by forced induction, including:

- A new 1.7L supercharger spins at up to 20,000 rpm – 5,000 rpm more than the supercharger on the ZR1's engine;
- The rotors are smaller in diameter, which contributes to their higher-rpm capability – and enables them to produce power-enhancing boost earlier in the rpm band;
- That boost is achieved more



Z06 powerplant delivers 650 hp

efficiently via a more direct discharge port that creates less turbulence, reducing heat and speeding airflow into the engine.

"The Small Block's cam-in-block design heritage has always enabled very high performance and responsiveness in a small, compact package – an attribute amplified by the performance of our new supercharger's design," said Lee.

The LT4 is assembled at GM's Bowling Green Assembly plant and at GM's Tonawanda engine plant in New York. It is matched with a standard seven-speed manual transmission or an all-new, paddle-shift eight-speed automatic transmission built in Toledo, Ohio.

June Will Be Busting Out All Over – the Skies

Kids and parents alike will be looking skyward on the evening of June 23.

That's when Hart Plaza in downtown Detroit will be the scene of the Ford Fireworks display.

The display, sponsored by Ford Motor Company, begins after dark, but those wishing to observe the show can begin gathering in Hart Plaza after 2 p.m.

Entry to the plaza will closed once maximum capacity has been reached, said event spokesperson Rose Lowe.

There is no re-admittance once someone leaves Hart Plaza, Lowe said. Additionally, no tents are allowed. Nor are alcohol, pets, or contraband (weapons, knives, etc.).

Lowe also said flames or fires are prohibited, cooking is prohibited, and coolers and backpacks will be searched.

Belle Isle will be open for vehicle traffic after 2 p.m., Lowe said, and consumer fireworks will be banned.

‘Doc K’ Marks 50 Years of ‘Great Ride’ at Kettering U.

FLINT, Mich. (AP) – Everyone knows him as Doc K.

His enthusiasm for students and new ideas is felt throughout the Kettering University community, as it should be. Because come July 8, mechanical engineering professor Henry Kowalski will celebrate 50 years at the university.

"If I had to do it all over again, I'd do the same thing. It's been a great ride," Kowalski, 78, told *The Flint Journal*. "It's been a great ride."

He started at Kettering University in 1964 when it was still known as General Motors Institute. Before that, he taught at Wayne State University, where he graduated with a degree in engineering that initially landed him a job at an aircraft manufacturing company.

Teaching was always in his nature, he said. And there's something special about Kettering and its students. That's what has kept him at the university for so long.

He's taught thousands of students throughout the years, maybe close to 10,000. And he's been at the university through five different university presidents.

Kowalski was recently honored for his time at the university during Kettering's Homecoming events. He joins a small group of professors that were honored for such a long term at the university. Professor Reg Bell was honored last year for teaching 200 consecutive terms.

Kowalski still remembers his first class when a student raised his hand during the lesson and told him, "Sir, we don't do it that way at Chevrolet."

"I knew (Kettering students) were different right then and there," said Kowalski, adding that they were focused, pragmatic and respectful. "I figured this is a place I want to be . . . It's been all about the students."

Outside of his time in the classroom, Kowalski is the faculty adviser for Kettering's FIRST

robotics team. In fact, he helped start the team Metal Muscle roughly a decade ago. And then a few years later, he sought out scholarship funds to allow more high schools to get involved.

He is also a faculty adviser for the Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority.

Mackenzie Stratton, a junior at Kettering, has gotten to know Kowalski during her time in Alpha Sigma Alpha and as a FIRST mentor, as well as one of his students.

"Doc K is just a great person in general. He is always there for his students no matter what," said Stratton, 21, of Burton, a Flint suburb. "He thinks that Kettering students are the best students in the world. He is just selfless."

Whether it's through extra tutoring or just mentoring students, Stratton said Kowalski is willing to go the extra step to help students succeed.

In class, he helps students understand how information will be applied outside of class and he knows how to keep students engaged, Stratton said.

"He can make anything interesting. I think that's really important to him and important to the students," she said, adding that he has a great character. "He's funny. I like to call him sassy. He's very funny. He's very sarcastic."

He's a great mentor for the high school students on the robotics team, Stratton said. He makes them feel welcome because what they are doing is important, she said.

But the biggest thing she's learned from Kowalski is that it doesn't matter if a student is the smartest or the most academically inclined person. That doesn't make the best engineer, Stratton said.

"He's taught me that as long as you try and you're willing to learn then you're going to get somewhere," Stratton said. "Doc K treats all of his students, especially those who show him they care, like his own children."

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