

Torrential Downpour Forces Tech Center To Close; City Hit with Record 5.2 Inches

by Jim Stickford

Aug. 11's heavy rains were severe enough to shut down GM's Tech Center in Warren for a day. The storm also caused additional emergencies around the city. GM spokesperson Katie McBride said the decision to close the 330-acre Tech Center was made in the early hours of Aug. 12. "The decision was made based on the significant flooding that took place on the campus during Monday's storm," McBride said. "The facility also suffered from

intermittent power outages, so it was decided to close the Tech Center down. The rain was bad. It took me five hours to get home from downtown Detroit." The 19,000 engineers, designers and others were told to stay home while the flood-damaged facilities were cleaned. Employees were notified by several different methods, McBride said. "We have a mechanism in place to notify employees in case of such an emergency," McBride said. "We use texts, emails and have a system in place to make tele-

phone calls to peoples' mobile phones." Because of the flooding and power problems, GM's email system also suffered problems, so all three methods were used, McBride said. Once the employees were notified of the situation at the Tech Center, GM put all its priorities in getting the campus cleaned up and everything up and running. "We focused on safety," McBride said. "We were committed to getting the campus back to normal." By Aug. 13, McBride said, approximately 10,000 Tech Center



Gates were closed to the GM Tech Center in Warren on Aug. 12.

employees returned to their jobs. "Our main priority was getting the people whose jobs involved serving the public – the call center, OnStar and the IT center – up and running for all three shifts," McBride said. "We did have some flooding in

some of the basements of buildings at the Tech Center – just like a lot of homeowners. And cleaning up a flooded basement presents all kinds of safety and health difficulties."

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2015 Chevrolet Sonic

Sonic Among 'Top 10 Back-to-School Cars'

The Chevrolet Sonic is again one of the 10 Best Back-to-School Cars of 2014 chosen by Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com. For the third year in a row, the Sonic was recognized by the editors at KBB.com for its practicality, affordability, style, features and personality, said GM spokesperson Afaf Farah. "Chevrolet prides itself on offering something for everyone, no matter which road of life they are on," said Steve Majoros, director, Chevrolet Car Marketing.

"The Sonic is perfect for students, offering easy-to-use technology and connectivity as well as safety, versatility, and economy in a stylish package." The Sonic is the only car on the list built in America and is the only domestic model included. It is assembled at General Motors' Orion Assembly plant in Orion Township. Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com touted the Sonic in the past for its stylish appearance and exciting performance, while still fo-

cusing on safety with 10 airbags and fuel efficiency with 40 mpg highway. An advanced safety package including forward collision alert and lane departure warning – crash-avoidance technologies typically found on cars costing more – is also available on all but base Sonic models, as well as a rear vision camera. When selecting its list of vehicles, KBB editors wrote: "Each of

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GM's 'Design on Woodward' Shows Staffers' Love of Cars

by Jim Stickford

As the old saying goes – show, don't tell. That's what the employees of GM's Design Center did on Aug. 13 at their "Design on Woodward" car show. The event was held at the corner of 13 Mile and Woodward during the afternoon. This year's "Design on Woodward" organizer Carole Sawyer works in the Design Center's Business Operations department and said that they started organizing this year's show back in March. "This is the fifth year of 'Design on Woodward,'" Sawyer said. "This is entirely done by employees of the Design Center. There's no corporate sponsorship. We raise money through the sale of

T-shirts. This is the premier summer event for Design Center employees." Usually, Sawyer said, the event starts out on the grounds of the Tech Center with a caravan of vehicles that leave the Tech Center with a Warren police escort and drive to the show location. "But obviously with what just happened with the storm and parts of the Tech Center being flooded, we canceled that part of the show," Sawyer said. "We had 120 vehicles, all owned by Design Center employees, registered to be in the parade and be part of the show. "Getting the word out with the details of what we were doing because of the flood wasn't easy. We sent emails, texts, used word-of-mouth. People got the message and we still were able to get



GM Design Center employees joined the crowds that came out for "Design on Woodward" Aug. 13.

the vehicles to 13 and Woodward." When asked if she had a car in the show, Sawyer just laughed. "No, I drive a 2014 Chevy Equi-

nox," Sawyer said. "It's the same color as my 2010 Equinox. I just love that model." GM spokesperson Pam Flores said that a lot of Design Center

employees brought their "project" cars to the show. She defined project car as a vehicle that

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Motor City Vipers Club members gathered in Royal Oak to celebrate the Dream Cruise.

Viper Owners Gather for Pre-Dream Cruise Event

by Jim Stickford

Viper owners love their cars and they love their fellow Viper owners. Just ask Jess Hackney, president of the Motor City Viper Owners Club, which held a special gathering at the corner of 13 Mile and Woodward on Aug. 14 as part of their celebration of the Woodward Dream Cruise. "All car clubs say that their members come for the cars but stay for the people," Hackney said. "That's certainly true for the MCVOC. I've been a member

for 12 years and I've owned a Viper for 12 years. My first was a 1996 RT. I now own a 2008 SRT convertible. Vipers are fun cars driven by fun people." Hackney said that the club has about 130 members, not all from metro Detroit. Some are based in western Michigan, some come from the U.P., and there are members who live in Ohio. One member has 16 Vipers. Hackney knows of a man in Texas who owns 63 Vipers. When asked what someone does with

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Johnson Controls Opens New Seat Testing Facility

Johnson Controls' new state-of-the-art crash test facility opened for business at its Automotive Seating headquarters in Plymouth on Aug. 7.

The 6,000-square-foot facility, said Johnson spokesperson Mary Kay Doderer, houses a Seattle Safety ServoSled that allows the automotive supplier to offer the most accurate, standardized safety testing of seats globally through collaboration with Johnson Control's other testing facilities in Burscheid, Germany; Changchun and Shanghai, China; and Yokohama, Japan.

"The investment in this new North American crash test facility reinforces our commitment to innovation and technology as well as the safety of our products," said Jeff Williams, group vice president and general manager of Johnson Controls Automotive Seating's global Complete Seat and Supply Chain group.

"There are only 44 ServoSleds worldwide and only 10 in the United States. Johnson Controls has one of the largest sled testing networks globally."

The new laboratory addresses increasingly stringent and precise governmental seat safety specifications as well as its customers' expectations for a testing environment that meets evolving industry standards, Williams said.

Global collaboration on validation methods and equipment ensures that similar results are achieved regardless of the testing location.

The new sled is a closed-loop system that allows Johnson Controls to monitor in real-time what is happening to the seat or seat component as a test is being run by the company's engineers.

Test results from the new equipment are extremely accurate, repeatable and predictable, Williams said.

Such high-precision tests, he said, enable engineers to gain insight into the stability and dynamic behavior of seat structures as well as evaluate the effectiveness of head restraints in preventing whiplash, and find potential areas for improvement.

GM Hikes Recalled Vehicles to More Than 29 Million

DETROIT (AP) – General Motors issued six more recalls on Aug. 8 totaling more than 312,000 vehicles as the company cleans up past safety issues.

The recalls in North America pushed GM's total for the year to 66, covering just over 29 million cars and trucks. That beats the company's old full-year record and has pushed this total number for the industry this year to more than 40 million, also an annual record.

The largest of the recalls covers 215,243 Saturn Vue SUVs from the 2002 through 2004 model years. GM says keys can be removed when ignitions are not in the "off" position. The problem is linked to two crashes and one injury.

GM is conducting a company-wide safety review following a bungled recall of 2.6 million small cars with faulty ignition switches. GM has admitted knowing about the defective switches for at least a decade, yet it didn't recall the cars until February.

In the recalls announced Aug.

8, GM has told dealers to stop selling some of the vehicles until repairs are made.

Including the Vue recall, GM has called back more than 17.5 million vehicles for ignition switch problems. In many cases, the switches can be knocked from the "run" position to "accessory," shutting off the engine and disabling the power steering, power brakes and air bags.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the U.S. government's road safety agency, is investigating ignition switches across the auto industry to make sure they can't be inadvertently moved from the run position.

Dealers will inspect the Vue ignitions and replace the cylinder if needed at no cost to customers. The company says it's important for drivers to make sure the SUVs are in "Park" before they exit the vehicles.

Other recalls announced Aug. 8 include:

- 72,826 Cadillac ATS, Chevrolet Trax in Canada and Buick Encore cars and SUVs from the 2013

model year. In some of the vehicles, the front lap belts may not lock properly, allowing people to move in a crash. Dealers will replace the belt pretensioners. GM doesn't know of any crashes, but it has told dealers not to sell the vehicles until repairs are done.

- 15,386 Chevrolet Impalas from 2014 and 2015. On some LT and LTZ models, the front console storage door may not latch properly in a rear crash. Dealers will replace the latch. The company knows of no crashes or injuries, but it's ordering dealers to hold the cars until repairs can be made.

- 3,624 Cadillac ATS sedans from 2013 and 2014 to fix a prob-

lem with front lighting. These cars were all exported from the U.S.

- 3,110 Chevrolet Spark minicars from 2014. Lower control arm bolts in the suspensions may not be tightened to specifications. Owners have been told to have their cars transported to dealerships for inspection and tightening. No crashes reported.

- 2,091 Chevrolet Aveo subcompacts from 2009 and 2010, 2009 Pontiac G3 subcompacts and the 2007 Chevrolet Optra in Canada. A brake fluid issue could lead to longer brake pedal travel and reduced brake performance. GM knows of no crashes or injuries.

Bad Clip Forces Ford Recall

DETROIT (AP) – Ford is recalling 83,250 vehicles because a faulty part could cause them to lose power or roll away if they're parked.

The recall involves the 2012-14 Ford Edge and Lincoln MKX; the 2013-14 Ford Flex and Lincoln MKT; and the 2013-14 Ford Taurus and Lincoln MKS.

The company says that due to the improper installation of a clip in the axle, the halfshaft can dis-

engage from the linkshaft. If that happens, power won't be transmitted to the wheels, increasing the risk of a crash. Also, the vehicles could roll out of the "park" position if the emergency brake isn't engaged.

Ford says there have been no reports of injuries or accidents related to the defect.

Ford will notify owners and begin free repairs by the end of August.

Ford Leads RV Chassis Sales

Ford has boosted production of its Class A motorhome chassis and introduced new options in response to growing consumer confidence and demand for recreational vehicles.

Total motorhome sales are up 13 percent year-to-date through May, according to data from Statistical Surveys Inc., a market analysis company specializing in the RV, marine and manufactured housing industries. Sales of Class A motorhomes – the largest and most luxurious on the road – are up 12 percent through May. Sales of smaller van cutaway-based Class C motorhomes are up 14 percent for the same period.

"Motorhome sales are cyclical, and correlate with improving economic performance," said Erich Merkle, Ford sales analyst. "Like boats, homes and luxury cars, motorhomes – especially Class A – are big-ticket items, so when we see a continued upward trend in sales, it means people have far greater confidence to make a large, discretionary purchase."

Ford leads both the Class A and Class C motorhome chassis markets, with a 63 percent share of the Class A market and 72 percent share in Class C chassis year-to-date through May, according to data from Statistical Surveys Inc.

Ford's chassis sales are outpacing the market. Merkle said. Total Ford chassis sales are up 16.5 percent year-to-date through May, compared with the 13 percent growth in total motorhome sales. Ford Class A motorhome stripped chassis sales are up 17 percent versus the total Class A market's 12 percent, while Ford's Class C van cutaway chassis sales grew 16 percent.

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Torrential Rains Impact City, Warren's GM Tech Center

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The Tech Center wasn't the only part of Warren to suffer as a result of the severe rain.

Mayor Jim Fouts, on Aug. 12, declared a state of emergency within the city after the community was pounded with 5.2 inches of rainfall.

In a statement to the media, Fouts said that on Aug. 11 Warren "sustained severe flood damage" that caused most of the city's roads to be closed.

Additionally, about 400 residents had to be rescued by boat.

Sadly, Fouts said, one 31-year-old resident died from a seizure while she was in her vehicle during the flooding.

And, a 100-year-old resident of the city was found dead in her basement, which had been flooded. Apparently, she tried to deal with the problem herself and fell, Fouts said.

Warren residents who found themselves stranded and unable to get to their homes were temporarily housed in the city's Community Center.

Fouts also credited the Salvation Army for responding to calls for help and assisting those at the Community Center while they were there.

The city's departments of public works, waste water, police and fire were overwhelmed during the emergency, Fouts said.

And it wasn't only homes that were flooded. The basement of the police department and city courts ended up under six feet of water.

"The fire department reported 16 electrical fires in the city," Fouts said in his request for aid on Aug. 12.

"Thousands of residents experienced serious flooded basements. Therefore . . . I have declared that a 'state of emergency' exists within our jurisdiction."

Ford, Chrysler Also Affected by Rains, Floods

Although the GM Tech Center was closed because of heavy rains last week, GM said production at local plants wasn't affected.

But flooding did cause slow-downs at Detroit's other two automakers.

Four Chrysler plants – including one in Detroit and three in the suburbs of Warren and Sterling Heights – were flooded Aug. 11.

The company halted operations at its Sterling Heights Assembly Plant at 9 p.m. that night and released employees again the next morning. Chrysler said road closings caused by flooding have slowed deliveries and caused high absenteeism.

Three other Chrysler plants were running the morning of Aug. 12, but at a slow rate. Chrysler resumed normal production at all four plants later that day.

Ford also slowed production Aug. 11 at four suburban Detroit plants in Dearborn, Wayne and Sterling Heights.

Assembly plants in Chicago and Louisville, Ky., were also impacted because of flooding at Michigan-based suppliers.

Ford said all of its plants were running normally the morning of Aug. 12.

exists within our jurisdiction."

This put into effect the city's response and recovery emergency operations plan.

Jennifer Fiore, general counsel for Road Aid Towing in Warren, said they didn't start getting busy until about 7 or 8 p.m. on Aug. 11.

"That's when we started getting calls," Fiore said. "That's when the heavy flooding started and we mobilized."

Mobilization, Fiore said, consisted of contacting all available tow drivers in Southeast Michigan and getting the company's specialized equipment ready.

"The flooding was so bad that even our standard tow trucks couldn't get to the affected areas," Fiore said.

"We had to use our heavy trucks with front-end loaders."

"The worst flooding was around Mound Road and I-696, and around 13 Mile and Van Dyke."

"When they closed down the Tech Center because of flooding, you know it got pretty bad."

Road Aid, Fiore said, handled vehicles outside Warren as well. And two days after the flood, the company was still playing catch-up.

"What happened was that when people got caught in the rain and realized they couldn't drive, they abandoned their cars," Fiore said.

"When they got back to where they left their vehicles, they often discovered that the vehicles were under water."

Towing the cars to the impound yard was just the first step in the process, Fiore said.

The flooded cars don't stay in the impound yard, he said, they are then taken to locations dictated by the owners' insurance companies.

When asked if they had ever seen anything like this before, Fiore said that the company was just as busy last winter during the Polar Vortex.

"When cars are abandoned on the streets because of heavy snow, we tow those vehicles," Fiore said.



A usually crowded Tech Center parking lot stands nearly empty Aug. 12 as flooding forced gates to close.

"We were just as busy last winter as we are now. Also, when Hurricane Sandy hit the East Coast, we mobilized our trucks and sent them out there as well. We'll be playing catch-up for several days."

Among the businesses in Warren that were flooded was the Buddy's Pizza on Old 13 Mile Road next to Bear Creek, which overflowed on the evening of Aug. 11, flooding the restaurant's parking lot.

There were a number of vehicles in the parking lot that ended up getting flooded and were still being towed away two days later.

"We at Buddy's Pizza are doing all we can to assist in the post-flood clean-up effort," said Wes Pikula, vice president of Operations, in a statement to the media.

"Our staff here at the Warren location has been working with the Warren Fire Department to



A flooded car is being towed from the Buddy's Pizza at 13 and Van Dyke.

assist those whose cars were stranded along the area of 13 Mile and Van Dyke due to the extreme weather.

"Our location is temporarily closed. We are now in the process of cleaning."

"We're in contact with health

officials and doing all we can to ensure the safety of our clientele when we reopen."

"I'm proud of our staff and our customers, who worked together to help one another during a challenging time this week."

Sonic Among 'Top 10 Back-to-School Cars'

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the KBB.com editors' new-car recommendations starts below \$20,000, according to Kelley Blue Book's Fair Purchase Price.

"Updated weekly and based on current market conditions like vehicle availability, local demand and seasonal buying trends, the Kelley Blue Book Fair Purchase Price shows shoppers what others have been paying for a new car recently and is included in KBB.com's Price Advisor tool, which provides range-based market pricing."

"Regardless of a student's interests or style, there is a stellar new-car option for them on our diverse 10 Best Back-to-School Cars list for 2014," said Jack R. Nerad, executive editorial director and executive market analyst for Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com.

For the 2015 model year, the Sonic will add standard OnStar with 4G LTE and a built-in Wi-Fi hotspot, which provides a mobile hub for drivers and passengers to stay connected, Farah said.

The hotspot is on when the car is on and comes with a three-

month/three-gigabyte data trial.

With the Sonic's Siri Eyes Free integration, students with a compatible iPhone running iOS6 or iOS7 can direct Siri to perform a number of tasks through the available MyLink infotainment system while they safely keep their eyes on the road and their hands on the wheel.

Drivers also can use their smartphone to drive navigation through the MyLink system with the available BringGo navigation app, and listen to their favorite radio station nationwide through the available TuneIn application.

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Viper Owners Gather for Pre-Dream Cruise Event

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63 Vipers, Hackney said, "Get talked about."

Hackney said having owned a couple of different Vipers from different eras, he also appreciates the fact that Chrysler has continually improved the car.

"Over the last 20 years or so," Hackney said, "Chrysler has really learned how to make Vipers. The latest model is tight. The gaps are proper and the fit-and-finish is so good."

David Buchesky is a charter member of the MCVOC. He said they started the club in the 1990s and based it on Corvette clubs.

"I got a Viper because it was the Cobra of the '90s," Buchesky said. "Some of the original members of the MCVOC owned Corvettes in the past and belonged to Corvette clubs. They said that those clubs were a lot of fun to belong to, so why not have one for Vipers. We're an active club and have a lot of events like this one for the Woodward Dream Cruise."

His wife Jean said that the club will be holding a cruise in the Upper Peninsula come September.

When asked why he bought a Viper, Buchesky said he was an engineer at Chrysler for more than 30 years and worked on the suspension and brakes for the Viper.

"The first car I worked on for Chrysler was the 1962 Imperial," Buchesky said. "I must say cars sure changed between the '62 Imperial and the introduction of the Viper in the 1990s. I was able to buy a '62 Imperial a few years

ago. I love the smooth ride and when I drive, I feel like Elvis."

Buchesky said that while the Imperial is a simpler car to fix than the Viper, getting parts is a lot harder.

Buchesky likes the new Gen 5 Viper. It has traction control and "something called the X Member," which is an engine compartment X brace that helps reinforce the front of the car and stiffen the frame.

Not all Viper owners appreciate the Gen 5 version of the vehicle like Buchesky.

For Dick Winkles, the last original engineer at Chrysler still working on Vipers, said that he has great affection for the Gen 4, one of which he happens to own.

"Now the Gen 5 is a fine car that comes with traction control," Winkles said. "I've been working on Vipers for a long time and they're all great cars. And when I decided to buy one after driving Vipers from work, I was glad that I got a Gen 4. They're very different from Gen 5 because with traction control Gen 5 drivers can be very confident with their cars."

Gen 4s, Winkles said, on the other hand, don't have traction control, which means that drivers have to pay very close attention to what they're doing at all times.

"The Gen 4 Viper has that edge, that bit of danger that makes it, at least to me, more exciting to drive," Winkles said. "They're like the old muscle cars from the 1960s and 1970s. There's a lot of power there and the driver really has to pay atten-



David and Jean Buchesky with their 1994 Viper

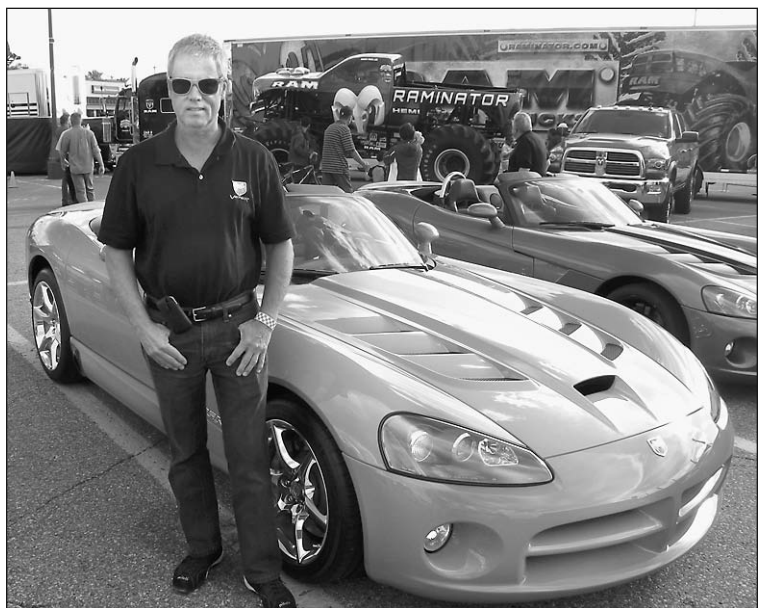
tion to stay in control. That's what made them exciting to drive."

Winkles' Viper is the 2008 model. He has put 3,200 miles on it.

"Now don't let that number fool you," Winkles said. "I may not have put that many miles on my Viper, but I drive many Vipers for work all the time. So I have thousands and thousands of Viper miles under my belt."

For Mark Trostle, head of Design - SRT, Mopar Motorsport, seeing all the MCVOC members get their cars together reminds him of the passion that people can have for their cars.

"This is awesome being here," Trostle said. "I myself drove a 2014 snakeskin green Viper to get to this celebration. It was the one we had on display at the 2014 Detroit Auto Show."



Dick Winkles and his 2008 Viper

GM's 'Design on Woodward' Annual Event Illustrates Designers' Passion for Cars

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someone purchased to restore and has spent considerable time getting it up to snuff.

For John Cafaro, executive director - Chevrolet Cars, being able to walk around and see the vehicles that Design Center employees put on display is a chance to revisit some designs that he worked on and loved.

"I've been with GM for 37 years now," Cafaro said. "I've been working at Chevy for a long time now. I've worked on a lot of cars."

"I joke that I'm just about the only GM executive with an AARP card."

"I must say that we have beautiful weather for the show. We usually caravan here, but things got a little bit under water - literally."

"What I'm enjoying is seeing all the classic Pontiacs. The brand is gone, and it's nice to see some great examples of Pontiac and to know that there is still passion for them."

One of the vehicles Cafaro looked at was the 1988 Fiero GT with a Northstar drivetrain.

The car is owned by retired Tech Center employee Ken Shadlak.

"They made this particular model for five years and 1988 was the last year Pontiac made it," Shadlak said.

"I like it myself because its design was way ahead of its time. It almost looks modern, even today. I get kids at stoplights asking me, 'What kind of new car is this?' all the time."

Jeff Denison still works for GM as lead alias sculptor at the Design Center.

"That means I do digital sculpting, but I have a design degree from CCS and started out at GM working with clay," Denison said. "I have been with the company 30 years as of Aug. 8 this year."



Shadlak, left, and Cafaro check out Shadlak's 1988 Pontiac Fiero.

Denison's project car is a "1970-and-a-half" Trans Am. He calls it that because the car made its debut in mid-year.

"I've worked on this car for three years," Denison said. "I bought it in 1991, but didn't get around to restoring this one for a long time."

"I have about 30 GTOs and buy and sell vehicles all the time. This one was sitting in the back of my garage. It had to wait its turn."

A gearhead from way back, Denison still has the first car he owned, a 1967 GTO convertible. He said it has only 30,000 original miles on it.

"It's never seen a winter," Denison said. "When I bought it in 1973, it only had 5,000 miles on it."

"It was originally owned by someone in Virginia who died in Vietnam. A friend kept it until I bought it."

"Virginia winters are nothing compared to ours, and when it's winter here, I keep the GTO inside and don't drive it."

He said he did a complete restoration on the Trans Am. That included taking every nut and bolt apart and putting the car back together.

The paint job was done by his friend Scot Tienmann, who owns Super Cars Specialties in Portland, Mich.

"I'm taking a break right now," Denison said. "I've spent a lot of time and money fixing up the Trans Am."

"But it's been worth the efforts. It's a true beauty."

For Design Center painter Tony Churchwell, his 1964 Chevy II, also called a Nova, is a labor of love.

"I've owned this car since I was 15," Churchwell said. "That's 29 years. This started out as a father-and-son project. My dad Dave and I worked on it when I was in high school. He worked for GM in Wisconsin."

"After high school, I went into the Navy for six years, and Dad passed away right after I got out. This car and sharing it with others really means a lot to me."



GM's design vice president Ed Wellburn admires a 1994 Corvette.



Jeff Denison stands by his completely restored 1970 Pontiac Trans Am.



The 2015 Escalade Platinum interior

Cadillac Escalade Platinum To Launch at Year’s End

Cadillac has added numerous enhancements to the just-launched 2015 Escalade, said Uwe Ellinghaus, Cadillac’s chief marketing officer.

The changes, he said, include the new range-topping Platinum Collection model launching in the fourth quarter this year.

Escalade Platinum features “elegant, handcrafted luxury additions to both the exterior and interior,” said Ellinghaus.

The entire Escalade range gets new technical features, he said, highlighted by the addition of 4G LTE connectivity, a new 8-speed automatic transmission and a Surround View camera system for increased visibility.

“Since the launch just a few months ago, the next-generation Escalade has proved exceptionally desirable among luxury SUV buyers,” said Ellinghaus.

“Now, within the same year, we are able to elevate the Escalade line with the Platinum Collection, as well as deliver enhancements through the entire Escalade range.”

The 2015 Escalade Platinum extends and upgrades the use of premium materials within the Escalade’s cut and sewn interior, Ellinghaus said.

First- and second-row seats are wrapped in Nappa semi-aniline leather, while the dashboard, upper door panels and center console are clad in hand-stitched and hand-wrapped leather.

Customers can choose between two distinct interior environments, each paired with sueded microfiber headliner trim and unique exotic wood accents.

Escalade Platinum Collection is also “designed to provide passengers with unsurpassed com-

fort and convenience,” Ellinghaus said.

“Heated and cooled 18-way power front seats are standard, and include a massaging function on the driver’s seat.

“A pair of seven-inch LCD screens, embedded in the front headrests, supplement the overhead 9-inch screen, while a cooled center console compartment can keep chilled beverages handy.

“Platinum models also include premium floor mats and Platinum-branded door sill plates.”

In addition, all Escalade models – from the standard Collection through to the Platinum – feature a host of technology upgrades, Ellinghaus said.

Vehicle performance is aided by the new eight-speed automatic transmission that is standard on all models, as well as a two-speed transfer case standard on four-wheel-drive models, said Ellinghaus.

An electronic hands-free liftgate already standard on Escalade will also feature hands-free closing capability.

Like the new ATS sport sedan, Escalade includes OnStar with 4G LTE connectivity with a WiFi hotspot capable of connecting up to seven devices and inductive wireless device charging, said Ellinghaus.

Another feature is Surround View, which provides a “bird’s-eye view” of the area immediately surrounding the vehicle.

The enhancements add just \$1,275 to Escalade’s starting price in the U.S., for a total of \$73,965, including destination.

The top-of-the-range 2015 Escalade Platinum is priced from \$90,270, including \$995 in destination.

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Owners who use their third-row seating for passengers are more satisfied with the comfort and roominess of the third row than owners who don't, Van-Nieuwkuyk said.

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Chevrolet Volt Sales Up 13 Percent in July

The next-generation Chevrolet Volt will debut at the 2015 North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

The 2016 Volt will build on the award-winning original's strong foundation of technology innovation, said Global Chevrolet Chief Marketing Officer Tim Mahoney.

Volt sales were up 13 percent in July and more than 65,000 have been sold since it was introduced in late 2010 – making it the best-selling plug-in passenger car in the U.S. market, said Mahoney.

"Volt is the perfect example of the ingenuity that drives everything we do at Chevrolet," Mahoney said at the Center for Automotive Research Management Briefings in early August.

"Volt fully delivers on the promises of Find New Roads and will continue to provide consumers with the transportation solutions they need and deserve in the future."

Volt owners are driving more than 63 percent of their overall miles in electric vehicle mode, Mahoney said, collectively logging more than 500 million gas-free miles since the Volt's retail debut in 2010. That has saved more than 25 million gallons of gasoline.

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

Volt owners who charge regularly typically drive more than 970 miles between fill-ups and

visit the gas station less than once a month.

The Volt has received multiple customer satisfaction awards from leading third parties.

According to a recent leading independent satisfaction survey, the Volt is the highest-rated compact car under \$55,000, said Mahoney.

Owners are showing their satisfaction as well, he added. For the past three years, a leading customer publication has reported survey results showing more than 90 percent of Volt

owners said they would definitely buy a Volt again.

The Volt continues to draw buyers from non-General Motors' products.

In the 2013 calendar year, said Mahoney, nearly seven of 10 new Volt buyers traded in a non-GM vehicle, the majority of which were Toyota Priuses.

Among its accolades, the 2014 Volt has been recognized for its safety, most recently receiving the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety 2014 Top Safety Pick+ designation.



Tim Mahoney says next-gen Volt will debut at 2015 NAIAS.

Kids Help Kick Off Soccer Season In Manchester

Chevrolet hosted 11 children from around the world in Manchester, England, last week to serve as mascots for Manchester United's Premier League season opener at Old Trafford Stadium.

The children – ages 10-13 from Brazil, China, South Africa, South Korea and the United States, among others – visited as part of Chevrolet's "What Do You #Play-For?" campaign to bring football fans closer to the sport and spread the power of play around the world.

"Enabling these children to live the dream of being on the Old Trafford pitch with the Manchester United first team is an unprecedented and dramatic way to celebrate our global partnership with the club and our mission to spread the power of play around the world," said Tim Mahoney, Global Chevrolet's chief marketing officer.

"Watching them walk onto the pitch is sure to inspire football fans everywhere, and certainly will be special for their families and friends, as well as everyone at Chevrolet and Manchester United."

Besides serving as mascots, the children will attend the Club's famed Soccer School, meet Club legends, tour the Club's iconic stadium, and more.

"We are delighted to welcome such a diverse lineup of mascots to Old Trafford," said Richard Arnold, Manchester United Group managing director.

"This is the first time our mascots have traveled from such a wide range of countries and the occasion truly demonstrates the Club's global fan base and worldwide appeal."

"It's rare for 11 mascots to lead out the team, and their inclusion shows both Manchester United and Chevrolet's desire to mark this very special day."

The children were selected to serve as mascots due in part to their love of the game, determination to overcome a variety of



Anna of China is one of 11 children Chevy sent to Manchester, England.

challenges, and use play to realize anything is possible, said GM spokesperson Cristi Vazquez.

Each child's story is featured at www.ChevroletFC.com.

Since announcing its partnership with Manchester United in 2012, Chevrolet has used football to spread the power of play worldwide, including donating nearly 1 million nearly indestructible balls from the One World Futbol Project for use by more than 26 million youth in 60-plus countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

Chevrolet also recently revitalized a pitch in Bandung, Indonesia, on behalf of a local organization that uses soccer to increase the quality of life for people living with HIV and drug addiction.

Chevrolet also donated a pop-up pitch and pickup truck and trailer to help transform gang-ridden areas of Chicago into places where children can play and learn valuable life skills.

To celebrate its new, seven-year Manchester United shirt sponsorship, Chevrolet is inviting fans around the world to upload photos of themselves wearing a superimposed version of the new shirt at www.ChevroletFC.com.

Chevrolet also recently released a video on ChevroletFC.com featuring Manchester

United players, legends and fans paying homage to the history of the club's shirts.

The video has attracted more than 10 million views.

Chrysler and Audi To Face Penalties In Monopoly Case

BEIJING (AP) – GM's main China joint venture has joined automakers that say they have been contacted by Chinese anti-monopoly regulators as part of an investigation of the industry.

Shanghai GM's Aug. 13 announcement follows government announcements that Audi and Chrysler will face unspecified penalties for violating the country's anti-monopoly law. Mercedes Benz, Toyota's Lexus brand and Japanese parts suppliers also are under scrutiny.

Regulators have launched a series of anti-monopoly probes of global automakers and technology suppliers, prompting suggestions Beijing is trying to force down prices. China has yet to disclose the basis of their investigation but analysts say they might be motivated by complaints about high prices for imported luxury vehicles and replacement parts.

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GM to Build Stamping Facility in Lansing, Saving \$14M a Year in Material Handling

General Motors will start construction of a \$174 million stamping facility that will create or retain about 145 jobs.

The new facility, part of the company's Lansing Grand River Assembly Plant (LGR), will produce stamping components for the Cadillac ATS and Cadillac CTS family of vehicles and a future product, said Grand River Assembly spokesperson Erin Davis.

"Lansing Grand River Assembly is known for the high quality of its work and the flexible manufacturing that has been a trademark since it opened," said GM North America Manufacturing Manager Christine Sitek.

"Today's announcement demonstrates GM's commitment to strengthening key plant capabilities related to quality and efficiency."

The new facility, which comes on line in 2016, will save about \$14 million a year in logistics costs tied to material handling, said Davis.

Built in 2001, Lansing Grand River is GM's second-newest U.S. assembly plant.

Earlier this year, *Motor Trend* magazine recognized the new 2014 Cadillac CTS sedan with its Car of the Year award.

"This major investment is a vote of confidence in the hard-working membership of UAW Local 652," said UAW Vice President Cindy Estrada, who directs the union's General Motors Department.

"We're proud of the role we played in helping rebuild Michigan's economy through collective bargaining and negotiations for investment and jobs in our UAW-represented plants."

UAW Region 1D Director Gerald Kariem added, "I think I can speak for all of the UAW members at General Motors' Lansing Grand River plant when I say we are thrilled to have this additional investment in the plant and the jobs it will create in the community."

VMCCA Car Show Set for Sept. 21

The Lakeshore Chapter of the Veterans Motor Car Club of America will hold its 18th annual car show Sunday, Sept. 21, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Blossom Heath Park in St. Clair Shores.

Lakeshore chapter vice president Jim Jones said the show provides a great opportunity for classic car owners to show off their vehicles in a friendly atmosphere.

"The VMCCA Lakeshore Chapter meets once a month and we talk about cars," Jones said. "We're about cruising and enjoying our cars. Every year, we have a show at the Blossom Heath Park in St. Clair Shores. Money raised there goes to support the club throughout the rest of the year."

But, Jones said, the group also gives to charity, including The Turning Point shelter for battered women and children in Mount Clemens.

The cars aren't judged officially, Jones said, but they do have what they call their sponsors choice practice. A sponsor purchases a trophy that may be presented to whichever car he or she chooses.

Admission to the show is free for the public. Those wishing to enter a vehicle and pre-register are charged \$12. The gate fee the day of the show is \$15.

A swap meet will be held and door prizes given out every half-hour.

To learn more about the show, call Jones at 313-303-5531.

Including the latest announcement, GM has invested more than \$530 million in the facility since 2009.

These investments in Lansing include:

- 2010 - \$190 million for the addition of the Cadillac ATS, creating 600 jobs, and spending \$37 million at Lansing Delta Township Assembly plant for tooling and equipment to enhance the plant's manufacturing capabilities;
- 2011 - \$88 million for the new 2014 Cadillac CTS sedan;
- 2012 - Announced Lansing Grand River would produce the next-generation Camaro;
- 2013 - \$44.5 million and 200 jobs for a new logistics optimization center at LGR.

Since 2009, GM has announced nearly \$11 billion of investment in U.S. facilities, including \$777 million so far this year, Davis said.

"Once again, our hometown car company is hitting it out of the park with a massive new investment at Lansing Grand River," said Lansing Mayor Virg Bernero.

"I'm deeply grateful to General Motors for making the Lansing region a centerpiece of its global manufacturing strategy," he added.

"Its confidence in our world-class UAW workforce and strong partnership with local government will continue to deliver jobs and prosperity in Lansing for decades to come."

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