

Colorado Earns Motor Trend's 'Truck of Year'

After its most comprehensive truck evaluation program in history, *Motor Trend* has selected the Chevy Colorado as its 2015 Truck of the Year.

Motor Trend's Truck of the Year program is only open to all-new or significantly updated trucks and vans for the upcoming model year, said GM spokesperson Otie McKinley.

For 2015, seven contenders were invited to compete; three competitors were asked to bring a powertrain and/or body style variant for a total of 10 vehicles overall:

- Chevrolet Colorado WT and Colorado Z71;
- Chevrolet Silverado 3500 HD;
- Ford F150 2.7L EcoBoost and 3.5L EcoBoost;

- Ford F-450;
- Ford Transit 350 HR and Transit 150 MR;
- GMC Canyon SLT;
- GMC Sierra Denali 2500 HD.

The 2015 Colorado emerged as *Motor Trend's* 2015 Truck of the Year by a rare unanimous vote. The editors were particularly impressed with Colorado's handsome, clean-sheet design, "right-sized" package, excellent handling and overall capability. Colorado's powertrains also returned best-in-class fuel economy, according to Real MPG and EPA testing.

"After days of testing, hundreds of miles on the road, and our most rigorous truck testing program to date, our editors unanimously selected the Chevy Colorado as our 2015 Truck of

the Year," said Edward Loh, *Motor Trend's* editor-in-chief.

"Colorado is a smart, capable, and refreshingly honest truck that makes a strong value and efficiency statement. It's perfectly sized and suited for the needs of many of today's truck users."

"The Chevrolet Colorado offers customers the versatility of a pickup in a powerful, refined, fuel-efficient midsize package, with up to 27 mpg EPA highway," said Sandor Pizar, Chevy Trucks marketing director.

"For Colorado to emerge from *Motor Trend's* thorough evaluation as the 2015 Truck of the Year shows how Colorado is changing the game by offering truck customers fresh new choices."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



Ed Loh presents GM CEO Mary Barra with Truck of the Year award.



2015 Ram 1500

Ram 1500 Named Top Truck by Esquire

Esquire magazine has named the Ram 1500 EcoDiesel its Truck of the Year.

The announcement is highlighted in *Esquire's* December issue.

Esquire's editors, said Ram spokesperson Nick Cappa, consider all potential truck models in the U.S. market, balancing attributes with conventional touchstones that outline what makes a great truck, such as effi-

ciency, functionality, versatility, safety, value and style.

"Recognition from *Esquire* magazine is proof that pickups have found their way into a variety of lifestyles," said Bob Hegbloom, CEO of the Ram Truck Brand.

"In such a competitive market, we are thrilled to earn a 'Truck of the Year' title from *Esquire*. The Ram 1500 delivers with a winning combination of best-in-class fuel

economy and capability and going forward, Ram will continue to set the pace with the best trucks in their segments."

The EcoDiesel-powered Ram 1500 earned a 28 mpg rating from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the best highway-cycle test result ever achieved by a full-size, half-ton pickup, said Cappa.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Every Chrysler Brand Sees Sales Increase

Chrysler's November U.S. sales of 170,839 units was a 20 percent increase over last year, and the group's best November sales since 2001.

The Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Ram Truck and Fiat brands each posted year-over-year sales gains in November compared with the same month a year ago.

The Ram Truck brand's 31 percent increase was the largest sales gain of any Chrysler brand and the brand's best November sales since 2003.

On the individual model side, "Sales of our all-new Chrysler 200 sedan were up a strong 155 percent in November compared with a year ago, helping Chrysler Group to achieve its 56th consecutive month of year-over-year sales gains," said Reid Bigland, head of U.S. Sales.

"In total, we had 11 vehicles last month that set new sales records. Calendar year to date, Chrysler Group remains the fastest-growing automaker in the country."

Eleven Chrysler vehicles set records in the month of November, Bigland said. The Dodge Dart, Ram ProMaster and Ram Cargo Van each recorded their best-ever monthly sales.

In addition, the new Jeep Cherokee, Jeep Wrangler, Jeep Patriot, Chrysler 200, Dodge Challenger, Dodge Journey, Fiat 500L, and Ram pickup truck logged their best-ever November sales.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



2015 Dodge Dart



2015 Buick Encore

Auto Sales 'Very Healthy' – GM's McNeil

General Motors Co. dealers in the United States delivered 225,818 vehicles last month for the company's best November sales in seven years.

Total sales were up 6 percent compared with a year ago, retail sales were up 5 percent and fleet deliveries were up 11 percent.

GM estimates that the seasonally adjusted annual selling rate (SAAR) for light vehicles in November was 17.1 million, the

highest November SAAR since 2003, said Kurt McNeil, U.S. vice president of Sales Operations.

Calendar year to date, the SAAR is 16.5 million units, which is the upper end of the 16.0 million-16.5 million range GM forecasted at the beginning of the year.

Demand in November was robust for everything from smaller cars and crossovers to big trucks – all segments where GM

is strong, said McNeil. The Buick brand had its best November since 2003. GMC had its best November since 2001, and the GMC Sierra had its best November sales ever.

At Chevrolet, the Spark, Cruze and Equinox also had their best November sales ever, Silverado had its best November since 2006 and Traverse had its best

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

Mustang's November Sales Best in 8 Years

Ford Motor Company U.S. sales totaled 187,000 vehicles in November, down 2 percent from a year ago.

The overall sales decline was anticipated, said Ford spokesman Erich Merkle, as Ford manages its inventory levels while vehicle availability starts growing for the new Ford Mustang, F-150 and Transit models.

"When you start taking a look, we just got Dearborn Truck up and running and we still have Kansas City to go in the first

quarter of next year, so while we're going through that transitional process we're going to be very mindful and manage our incentive spend, relative to our inventory levels, to make sure that we're able to maintain inventory volumes as we move through the entire transition, which will take us into next year," said Merkle.

"Our all-new Mustang is moving quickly off dealer lots," said John Felice, Ford vice president, U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service.

"Mustang had its best November sales in eight years and is turning in just eight days on dealer lots, on average. Escape saw record sales for November, while Lincoln sales continue gaining momentum, with the brand posting its best sales since 2007."

Escape sales increased 22 percent versus last year with 25,528 vehicles sold, representing the vehicle's best-ever November performance. Explorer sales of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



2015 Ford Escape

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GM's Approved Ignition Switch Death Total at 36

DETROIT (AP) – At least 36 people have died and 44 have been seriously injured in crashes involving General Motors cars with defective ignition switches.

Attorney Kenneth Feinberg, who was hired by GM to compensate victims, updated the totals Dec. 1.

Feinberg says he has received 229 death claims and 1,986 injury claims since August.

The fund has made compensation offers to 57 of the 80 eligible claimants so far. Thirty-five have accepted; 20 have been paid.

GM knew about faulty ignition switches in Chevrolet Cobalts and other small cars for more than a decade but didn't recall them until February. The switches can slip out of the "on" position, which causes the cars to stall, knocks out power steering and turns off the air bags.

Feinberg will accept claims until Jan. 31.

GM Recall Cites Headlight Issue

DETROIT (AP) – General Motors is recalling 316,357 vehicles in North America because their headlights can stop working.

The recall affects the Buick LaCrosse sedan and the Chevrolet Trailblazer, GMC Envoy, Buick Rainier, Saab 9-7X and Isuzu Ascender SUVs. All of the vehicles are from the 2006 through 2009 model years.

GM says the low-beam headlights or daytime running lamps could intermittently or permanently stop working. If that happens, it increases the risk of a crash, said GM officials.

The issue doesn't affect the high-beam headlights, fog lamps or turn signals.

GM says it hasn't yet determined whether the defect has caused any accidents. Dealers will replace the defective headlights for free.

The recall is GM's 79th in North America this year. The automaker has recalled a record 30.4 million cars and trucks in the region.

Toyota Recalling 30,000 Minivans

LOS ANGELES (AP) – Toyota is recalling about 30,000 Sienna Minivans worldwide, saying the 2015 models' overhead assist grips can detach when an air bag deploys.

The automaker says that the grips, which are mounted to the minivans' roof rails, could detach from the mounting bracket under some conditions, potentially injuring passengers.

Toyota representatives say the company is not aware of any injuries or fatalities caused by the problem.

Dealers will modify the headliner under the second row overhead assist grips at no cost to owners.

Pressure Mounts for Nationwide Takata Air Bag Recall

WASHINGTON (AP) – Japan's Takata Corp. rejected federal regulators' demand Dec. 3 for an expanded, nationwide recall of millions of air bags, setting up a possible legal showdown and leaving some drivers to wonder about the safety of their cars.

Amid the standoff, Honda Motor Co. decided to act on its own and recall cars with the potentially defective equipment in all 50 states. But other automakers have yet to make a decision.

At issue are air bags whose inflators can explode with too much force, hurling shrapnel into the passenger compartment. At least five deaths and dozens of injuries have been linked to the problem worldwide.

Over the past six years, Takata and 10 automakers issued a series of recalls covering 8 million cars in the U.S., mostly in high-humidity areas such as the Gulf Coast, because of evidence that moisture can cause the propellant to burn too quickly.

But after incidents in California and North Carolina, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration began pressing for the recall of 8 million more vehicles from coast to coast – a demand that Takata flatly rejected.

"There's not enough scientific evidence to change from a regional recall to a national recall," Hiroshi Shimizu, Takata senior vice president of global quality assurance, told a House subcommittee on Capitol Hill.

Takata also contends that NHTSA has authority to seek recalls only from auto manufacturers and makers of replacement parts, not from original

parts suppliers – a position NHTSA contests.

Shimizu insisted that the air bags are safe: "I would drive a car with a Takata air bag."

David Friedman, NHTSA deputy administrator, said he was "deeply disappointed" by Takata's response.

The agency is now gathering proof that a recall is needed, which it will present at a public hearing. After that, NHTSA could order Takata to undertake a recall, and could take the company to court if it refuses. But Friedman acknowledged that could take months.

"It's time for industry to step up," Friedman told lawmakers. "Until (Takata) and automakers act, affected drivers won't be protected."

The stalemate is likely to add to the confusion among car owners, many of whom are already bewildered because some of the recalls have covered driver's-side air bags, while others applied to passenger-side air bags, and a few covered both. The NHTSA-demanded recalls would involve driver's-side air bags.

At the Dec. 3 hearing, Rep. Jan Schakowsky of Illinois, the panel's senior Democrat, said she has received letters from constituents "who are literally afraid to drive their cars."

Rep. Billy Long, R-Mo., warned that driving a car with a Takata air bag is "tantamount to driving down the highway with a shotgun pointed at you."

Drivers whose cars have been recalled should have received notices in the mail. A driver can also key in the vehicle's identifi-

cation number at www.safercar.gov or call the dealer to see if the car is covered.

But for those outside the recall zone who want to know if their air bags are safe, things get trickier. It's difficult to tell if a car has a Takata air bag inflator. Car owners can try asking their dealer, but even they may not know.

Honda is Takata's largest customer, but the company also made air bags for Ford, Chrysler, Mazda and BMW. Mazda said last week that it will probably expand its recall, while BMW said it is evaluating the situation.

Ford and Chrysler both expanded passenger air bag recalls last week to include states outside of the initial high-humidity zones. But neither automaker recalled additional driver's-side air bag inflators.

In a statement late Dec. 3, NHTSA said Chrysler's response was insufficient, and its plan to notify customers in January is too late.

Rick Schostek, executive vice president of Honda North America, said Honda is acting even though Takata hasn't identified problems beyond the current recall areas. Honda didn't say how many vehicles will be recalled, but the recall includes some of its most popular vehicles, including the 2001-07 Accord sedan and the 2002-06 CR-V SUV.

"Our customers have concerns and we want to address them," Schostek said.

Lawmakers expressed frustration that, after a decade, Takata still isn't certain about the cause of the explosions. They also questioned whether the replace-

ment air bags made by Takata will be safe.

Takata said it has tested 1,057 inflators taken from locations outside the high-humidity zone, and none of them ruptured.

The Dec. 3 hearing was the second in Congress regarding Takata air bags. Earlier this year, Congress held a series of highly publicized hearings into General Motors' handling of a recall of cars with defective ignition switches that are now linked to 36 deaths.

"I'm sorry to say that it has been a bad year for auto safety," Rep. Fred Upton, R-Michigan, said at the hearing's opening.

Ford Recalling Mustangs and Transit Connects

Ford Motor Company on Dec. 4 issued a vehicle recall of 728 2015 Ford Mustangs in North America for a potential fuel line leak.

A fuel pressure sensor, which is part of the fuel supply tube assembly, may have been installed incorrectly, potentially resulting in a pressurized fuel leak. A fuel leak in the presence of an ignition source may result in a fire.

Affected vehicles include certain 2015 Ford Mustangs equipped with 2.3-liter engines built at Flat Rock Assembly Plant Sept. 25 to Oct. 9, 2014.

Ford is aware of 712 vehicles in the United States and federalized territories and 16 in Canada. These totals are as of Dec. 3, 2014.

Ford also issued a safety recall for 19,825 2014 Transit Connect cargo vans in North America for an issue with adhesion of an exterior plastic panel to the sliding doors. This issue may result in noise, a water leak, a loose panel, or separation of the plastic panel from the vehicle while driving, potentially increasing the risk of an accident or injury, said Ford spokesperson Kelly Felker.

Affected vehicles include certain 2014 Transit Connect cargo van two-panel vehicles built at Valencia Assembly Plant, Aug. 9, 2013, to Sept. 20, 2014, and certain 2014 Transit Connect cargo van one-panel vehicles built at Valencia Assembly Plant, Aug. 9, 2013, to Sept. 20, 2014. All of the 19,825 vehicles are located in the United States.

Felker said Ford is unaware of any accidents or injuries related to these conditions for either recall.

Every Chrysler Brand Sees Sales Increase

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Besides the Chrysler 200 individual sales record, the Ram Truck and Chrysler brands recorded the largest percentage sales gains of Chrysler brands in November.

Chrysler finished the month with an 80 days supply of inventory, Bigland said. U.S. industry sales figures for November are internally projected at an estimated 17.5 million units Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate (SAAR).

Sales of the Ram pickup were up 21 percent in November, its 55th consecutive month of year-over-year sales gains, Kisiel said. It was the pickup truck's best-ever November sales. Ram Light Duty sales increased 30 percent in November while Ram Heavy Duty pickups were up 3 percent.

Ram Truck brand sales, which include the Ram ProMaster van and Ram Cargo Van, were up 31 percent, the brand's best November sales in 11 years.

Both the ProMaster and Cargo Van recorded their best-ever monthly sales last month.

Chrysler brand sales were up 30 percent, the brand's best November sales since 2007. Sales of the Chrysler 300 increased 18 percent last month, the full-size sedan's best November sales in seven years.

Jeep brand sales were up 27 percent, the brand's best sales performance ever in the month of November and its 14th consecutive month of year-over-year sales gains. The Jeep brand has set a sales record in each month this year, including its all-time sales record in May.

The Jeep Cherokee, Wrangler and Patriot each logged their best-ever November sales. The new Cherokee was the brand's highest-volume seller for the third straight month.

Dodge brand sales were up slightly year-over-year in November, the brand's best November sales since 2007.

Sales of the Dodge Dart were up 39 percent, the compact sedan's best-ever monthly sales, eclipsing the all-time record it set in May of this year.

The Dodge Challenger and Dodge Journey each recorded their best-ever sales for the month of November.

The Challenger's 51 percent increase was the largest percentage sales gain of any Dodge brand model in the month.

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Viper Sales Jump-Started with Lower Price

Dodge Viper sales have been on a run since the brand repositioned the limited-production hand-built car in September.

And Dodge is building on the momentum, opening the system for dealers to place sold customer orders of the newly equipped 2015.5 Dodge Viper GTS and TA 2.0 Special Edition, said Chrysler spokesperson Kristin Starnes.

The two new models join the SRT and GT models in the Viper lineup.

"The jump in Viper's September sales after we announced the new \$84,995 starting price showed that the overall reposi-

tioning was on target," said Tim Kuniskis, Dodge and SRT's CEO. "But that was just the start.

"We're expanding the Viper lineup by offering the track-ready Viper TA 2.0 and GTS models with even more content. This limited-production hand-built super car is the flagship of the Dodge brand, and we will continue to show our commitment to its future."

Reaching back into its 100-year history, Kuniskis said Dodge is using the formula that successfully launched the original 1992 Dodge Viper, but with even more power, refinement and craftsmanship.

Adjusting for inflation, he said, the 2015 model-year Viper is priced competitively with the first-generation Viper in 1992, as calculated by *Kelley Blue Book*.

When Viper was first introduced, the U.S. MSRP was \$50,700, which equates to \$86,130 in today's dollars, Kuniskis said.

In addition to the lower starting price, "the hand-built American exotic," he said, now delivers an increased 645 horsepower and gets up to 20 miles per gallon.

Now, in addition to the SRT and GT models, customers can order the 2015.5 Viper TA 2.0 Special Edition and GTS models, both of which feature more standard content compared with the



2015 SRT GTS Viper

2014 models they replace, Starnes said.

All Vipers are powered by an 8.4-liter aluminum V10, with 645 horsepower and 640 lb.-ft. of torque and a Tremec six-speed manual transmission, 18/19-inch polished Rattler wheels, four-wheel Brembo brakes, electronic stability control (ESC), dual side

exhausts, HID automatic headlamps, LED daytime running lamps and LED tail lamps.

Production of 2015 model-year Vipers began at the Conner Avenue Assembly Plant in Detroit in November. 2015 model-year Vipers will start arriving in dealerships in the first quarter of 2015.

Colorado Earns Motor Trend '2015 Truck of the Year'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

To determine which truck deserved top honors, the *Motor Trend* test team subjected all of the contenders to numerous instrumented and real-world road tests, Loh said, including *Motor Trend's* standard testing and other more trying tests for load carrying, acceleration, braking, maneuverability and outward visibility. The final phase of evaluation involved a 21-mile road loop through hills of Arizona's Hualapai Mountains.

Following the team's intensive evaluation, Loh said, the trucks were shipped to *Motor Trend* headquarters in El Segundo to undergo proprietary "Real MPG" fuel-economy testing. Using advanced exhaust gas and flow-rate analyzers, Real MPG measures tailpipe emissions every second during a three-hour, 88-mile drive around the Los Angeles area to record accurate real-world fuel economy.

Once testing was completed, select *Motor Trend* editors determined which truck would be

Truck of the Year. The winner is not chosen from a direct comparison against the other contenders, Loh said, but rather as a result of how each contender performed in testing and against the award's six criteria: Design Advancement, Engineering Excellence, Efficiency, Safety, Value, and Performance of Intended Function.

"When you receive such a prestigious award," said McKinley, "it validates what you've done. I wouldn't say we were surprised to see the Colorado so honored, but the truck segment is so competitive and there are a lot of good trucks out there. So having the Colorado win was really an honor."

When the news went out, McKinley said he received some congratulations from colleagues in the industry and he noticed that the Internet's social media also picked up the story and it received a lot of play there.

"This is a big award and it's just nice to see that people really value what we've done," McKinley said.

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Chevy Dealer's Blood Drive Answers Area Holiday Needs

In the midst of a holiday season, the call goes out for more and more volunteers to give blood.

That's why Buff Whalen Chevrolet in Sterling Heights, along with radio station WOMC, held a Southeast Michigan Red Cross-sponsored blood drive on Dec. 5.

"We constantly need blood donations," said Bridget McCormick, donor recruitment representative for the Southeast Michigan Red Cross.

"We've been working with Buff Whalen for many years. They hold four drives a year and they hold them at times when we need blood – the Christmas holiday season and the summer."

The reason those times are especially vital for blood collection, McCormick said, is because there is a daily need for blood

and they don't hold drives on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. But hospitals are still open and people still need transfusions.

"During these days and during the summer, people are busy – they're on vacation and traveling, so they don't have time to donate," McCormick said.

"But we need blood most during these times because a lot more people are traveling, which means more accidents, which means more need for blood."

McCormick said that people interested in donating during this holiday season can contact the Red Cross by going to its Web site www.redcrossblood.org.

Tom Bechtell, general manager of Buff Whalen Chevrolet, donated blood on Dec. 5, and said the dealership started holding blood drives just after 9/11.



Shelby Township's Dan Partyka was a donor at Buff Whalen Chevrolet.

"That's 13 years now," Bechtell said. "That's hard to believe. But we realized that this is something worth doing, so we've made it a regular thing. We hold four drives a year. Our next drive is on Friday, March 6."

"They say that every donated pint of blood can save three lives," McCormick said. "That

means a drive like this that gets 200 donations can save 600 lives.

"Donated blood is good for only 42 days, and platelets are good for only five days. We constantly need blood, so we are so grateful that WOMC and Buff Whalen Chevrolet have donated their time and resources for this drive."

GKN Employees Settle into New Digs in Auburn Hills

GKN Automotive has completed its move into a new regional headquarters for the Americas in Auburn Hills.

The new facility, as of Dec. 1, is home to the company's GKN Driveline and GKN Sinter Metals divisions.

In addition to serving as regional headquarters for both groups, the new site also houses employees from GKN's Land Systems and North American Services groups.

The 168,000-square-foot facility is located on an 11.2-acre site at 2200 N. Opdyke Road, previously occupied by Showcase Cinema.

GKN has been headquartered in Auburn Hills since 1986, and has more than 350 employees at the new location. In addition to employees from the previous headquarters, GKN consolidated an additional 40 team members from a facility at 36200 Mound Road in Sterling Heights.

"GKN's new headquarters complex provides state-of-the-art testing and validation equipment along with additional engineering design areas for driveline and sinter metal products," said the company's Americas Marketing Communications Manager Lori Petrelecan.

"The new facility provides the company with an additional 20 percent more space for engineering and testing activities."

"Moving into the new facility," said GKN Driveline Americas

President Robert Willig, "is an important step in supporting our customers around the world.

"Automakers are looking for supplier partners that can support their business globally and also provide a technical advantage that will increase vehicle performance, improve vehicle efficiency and meet the end customer's need for performance and functionality.

"Increasing our engineering resources in terms of equipment and talent will give GKN Driveline a significant competitive edge."

"Our new home," said Chris Franks, president, GKN Sinter Metals Americas, "is strategically located near many of our global customers and will give us access to the additional resources needed to provide world-class products and customer service.

"In addition, because we are centrally located in the heart of the automotive capital, we are well-positioned to attract additional talent throughout the company."

GKN Driveline is a producer of automotive driveline components and systems including constant-velocity-joint, all-wheel-drive, trans-axle and electric-drive systems. GKN Sinter Metals is the world's largest producer of precision powder-metal products, Petrelecan said.

She and other GKN officials also credited the support provided for the project by Michigan

Gov. Rick Snyder's office, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and the City of Auburn Hills for helping the company build its headquarters in the city.

Petrelecan said there are some interesting facts about GKN's new facility:

- The old Showcase Cinema building foundation and its parking lot were both recycled and used as base material for the new

building and parking lot. All metals from the previous structure were sorted and recycled.

- There are 21 conference rooms in the new building. All rooms are named after lakes in Michigan.

- The site has been reforested with new trees, including more than 25 evergreen trees that are 20 feet or taller along its north property line, to give the site a corporate park feel.

Eaton Does Well with Automakers

Power management company Eaton has engine boosting, and fuel- and emissions-saving technologies on 21 of the 38 engines nominated by *WardsAuto* for its 21st annual "10 Best Engines competition," said Eaton spokesperson Jim Michels.

This year's nominees feature a wide range of powertrain types and sizes, ranging from three- to eight-cylinder gasoline, diesel and compressed-natural-gas (CNG) internal combustion engines to hybrid- and full-electric systems and fuel cells, Michels said. Eaton's supercharger, valve-train, valve-actuation, fuel management and emissions control technologies help improve the efficiency, safety and overall performance of these diverse engine and fuel systems, he said.

"Our global engineering, design and manufacturing capabilities allow us to work closely with

leading automakers to meet stringent regulations and changing consumer preferences around the world," said Gerard DeVito, vice president of technology for the company's Vehicle Group.

Ford's Former Marketing Leader Bob Rewey Dies

Retired Ford marketing executive Robert L. Rewey died in his home in Palm Beach, Fla., on Saturday, Nov. 29. He was 76.

Rewey was born in Springfield, Ohio, and married his wife Suzanne in 1963, the same year he joined Ford.

Rewey's last position at Ford was as group vice president, Global Consumer Services and North America.

He retired from Ford in 2001, after spending 38 years with the company.

Rewey was appointed to his last position in January 2000. He had been group vice president, Marketing, Sales and Service for Ford Automotive Operations.

He also served as group vice president, Marketing and Sales, North American Automotive Operations, vice president and general manager of Ford Division and vice president and general manager of Lincoln Mercury.

"Bob Rewey was not only a

Automakers Will Join to Investigate Takata Air Bags

by TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) – Automakers that sell cars equipped with air bags made by Takata Corp. are teaming up to investigate why the bag's inflators can explode with too much force and spew shrapnel into the passenger compartment.

The companies announced the plan Dec. 2, and said they want to supplement tests that are under way now at Takata, the Japanese supplier at the center of a growing recall crisis.

So far, 10 automakers have recalled 14 million vehicles worldwide due to problems with the air bag inflators, including 8 million in the U.S. The recalls started a decade or so ago, and Takata has given various explanations for why the inflators can malfunction.

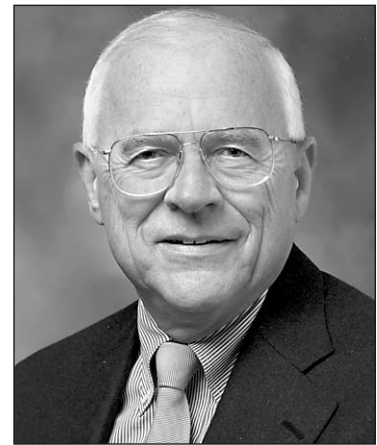
In a statement, Toyota said it will seek industrywide coordination to hire an independent engineering company, and all the affected companies would share in the results to figure out recall repairs. Other automakers, including Honda and Ford, agreed to cooperate.

The announcement came a day before Takata flatly rejected a NHTSA demand that Takata issue a national recall of driver's side air bag or face civil fines and legal action.

A nationwide recall would cover millions of additional vehicles. Some of the biggest recalls so far have been limited to high-humidity areas in the Southern U.S., plus Hawaii and some territories.

At least five deaths worldwide have been blamed on the problem.

NHTSA says its is gathering proof that a recall is needed.



Robert L. Rewey

great marketing visionary, but also a great leader and friend.

"He inspired a passion for connecting with the customer at Ford and initiated many groundbreaking marketing innovations, including leasing and brand management that set the standard for the entire auto industry," said Ford Executive Chairman Bill Ford, Jr.

Since his retirement from Ford, Rewey served on the board of directors of the LoJack Corporation.



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Ram 1500 Named 'Truck of Year' by Esquire Magazine
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

It also exceeds the EPA highway rating for the top-ranked small pickup, he said.

The previous half-ton fuel efficiency record was set by the Ram 1500 with the available 3.6-liter Pentastar V6 gasoline engine at 25 mpg highway.

"This is where the truck tide turns: a full-sized American pickup with a just-big-enough diesel V6 - the only one of its kind," Esquire magazine stated.

"You get the fuel economy of a small engine, the pulling power of a larger one and the grumble of a working-class diesel."

Ram 1500 delivers best-in-class fuel economy, said Cappa, with a truckload of pioneering, fuel-saving systems and first-in-segment technologies: TorqueFlite eight-speed automatic transmission, stop-start system, thermal management system, pulse-width modulation and active aerodynamics, including grille shutters and air suspension.

The Ram 1500, Cappa said, delivers an outstanding combination of best-in-class fuel efficiency, unsurpassed torque and a surplus of towing capability.

Ram truck offers models designed for a wide range of buyers, said Cappa, including outdoorsmen, tradesmen, first-time buyers and ranchers.

Laramie, Laramie Longhorn and Laramie Limited trims, said Cappa, are designed to meet the high expectations of affluent pickup truck buyers looking to combine capability with sophistication.

The Ram 1500 features premium materials, said Cappa, such as full-leather seating, real wood interior components and modish design, and smoothness of ride.

"In the truck market, about 40 percent of the people buy a particular vehicle out of brand loyalty," Cappa said.

"Another 40 percent buy because of the deal and the final 20 percent buy for things like ride or fuel economy or design or luxury.

"So having a nice interior has become more important. The truck market has expanded.

"It's not just the core truck buyer getting these vehicles anymore. The market segment is seeing customers who are switching from cars or SUVs and getting trucks.

DTE Donates to Keep Families Warm this Winter

DTE Energy is donating \$10 million to The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW) and United Way for Southeastern Michigan (UWSEM) to help vulnerable Michigan families stay warm this winter.

The Detroit energy company is providing this funding in direct response to the recent cold snap, said DTE spokesperson Alejandro Bodipo-Memba, as well as in anticipation of another harsh winter this year.

The donations, funded with shareholder dollars, will be split in half with THAW receiving \$5 million and UWSEM getting \$5 million.

"Last year was one of the coldest winters on record and we saw how critical the need was for families to try and keep warm," said Mark Stiers, president and chief operating officer of DTE Gas.

"This is why we are partnering with United Way and THAW to make sure that these funds get to the families that need them the most this winter."

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'Our Latest Small Block Engines Help Our Customers Save Money,' Says GM Marketing's John Fitzpatrick

When it comes to trucks, customers place dependability near the top of the list.

And when it comes to truck engines, more than 100 million engines' worth of continuous improvement and trillions of miles support the Chevrolet Silverado V6 and V8's claim to delivering on that requirement, said John Fitzpatrick, Silverado marketing manager.

"Silverado is from the family of the most dependable, longest-lasting full-size pickups on the road," he said. "Our latest generation of small-block engines help customers save money at the pump with engines that have been improved and by real-world experience."

GM spokesman Tom Read said a lot of potential customers don't know what these engines can do. But the word is getting out, and not just by GM.

"Just look at the December issue of *Hot Rod* magazine," Read said. "This engine platform, which is doing quite well in the marketplace, made the cover."

So, Read said, it becomes important to let people know just how the technology in the engine pays off in terms of both performance and mileage.

"I am talking about things like direct fuel injection technology and active fuel management systems – also known as cylinder deactivation technology," Read said.

"That's when the engine automatically shifts from a V8 or a V6 to V4 when it's appropriate. What people have to remember is that these engines are all new with new manufacturing systems. And all the engines, no matter what version you buy, have this technology.

"There's no 'up level' option with these engines. All the technology comes as part of the standard suite of technology no matter what truck customers buy, and that's pretty cool."

The 2015 Silverado offers a trio of EcoTec3 engines with advanced fuel-saving technologies, enabling customers to choose the performance and fuel efficiency that best meets their needs.

"We give customers the power . . . when they need it."

– Jordan Lee, GM Engineer

The three engines are:

- 4.3L V6, 285 horsepower, 305 lb.-ft. of torque, up to 24 mpg EPA highway;
- 5.3L V8, 355 horsepower, 383 lb.-ft. of torque, up to 23 mpg EPA highway;
- 6.2L V8, 420 horsepower, 460 lb.-ft. of torque, up to 21 mpg EPA highway.

"The latest small-block engines are ideally suited to Silverado and to the tough jobs that pickup customers do every day," said Jordan Lee, global chief engineer and program manager for Small Block engines.

"We give customers the power and torque of a full-size truck engine when they need it, then use Active Fuel Management and other advanced technologies to seamlessly shift to four-cylinder

operation when the truck is under light loads, making the most of fuel efficiency."

Silverado's EcoTec3 engines are direct descendants of the original Small Block Chevy V8, and benefit from more than 60 years – and more than 100 million engines' worth – of continuous improvement.

"Small-block engines have been used, abused, modified and raced in almost every type of car and truck imaginable," said Lee. "Our engineers are able to draw on that experience to build stronger, more efficient, more dependable engines for Chevy truck customers."

The latest Gen 5 small-block engine has endured tough testing, including a grueling performance durability procedure, where it was subjected to a high-speed/high-load torture session that simulated full-throttle blasts.

With simulated transmission shift points inserted during the high-load test, the engine cycles non-stop between peak torque and peak horsepower for hundreds of hours – the equivalent of thousands of miles.

Testing on the Gen 5 small-block that contributes to the legendary durability of the modern small-block engines include:

- Severe thermal cycle testing, which quickly cycles the engine between extreme cold and hot coolant temperatures to validate the durability of engine components such as the head gaskets, exhaust manifolds and more.

- The "hot scuff" test, in which a brand-new engine – or "green" engine to the engineers – is run at wide-open throttle with no break-in period, helping test critical engine parts such as

bearings, piston ring sealing and bore scuffing.

- Active Fuel Management (AFM) validation, which cycles the engine in and out of the cylinder-deactivating feature hundreds of thousands of times at a variety of engine speeds to ensure the performance and durability of its unique valve lifters.

2015 marks the 10th year of Active Fuel Management, the cylinder deactivation technology that improves fuel economy in trucks



5.3L V8 EcoTec3

by seamlessly switching to four-cylinder mode to help save fuel during light-load driving.



Chevrolet's Colorado ZR2 concept truck

Chevy Colorado ZR2 Concept Truck Debuts at Los Angeles Auto Show

by Jim Stickford

A vision of the future appeared at the recent Los Angeles Auto Show when Chevrolet introduced the Colorado ZR2 concept.

It was a look at how Chevrolet could take the all-new midsize truck's off-road capability to the next level, said GM spokesperson Otie McKinley. It also showcases the new 2.8L Duramax diesel engine that will arrive in the Colorado lineup later next year.

"The aggressively styled concept builds on the capabilities of the production Colorado Z71 and advances the legacy of Chevrolet's previous ZR2 production models," McKinley said.

Colorado Marketing Manager Tony Johnson added, "From the bold stance to the trail-ready special equipment, the Colorado ZR2 is all about the fun of driving where the pavement ends – and doing it in characteristic Chevy style.

"Chevrolet has a heritage of the ZR2 representing the ultimate in production-based off-road capability, and we'll gauge the public's interest in this concept as we continue to explore the possibilities for the all-new Colorado."

The Colorado ZR2's stance is four inches wider than a production Colorado Z71, Johnson said, with features including new front and rear fascias designed to increase approach and departure angles when driving off-road. Ground clearance and rough terrain are handled with a two-inch lift and integral skid plates, while the wider track helps enhance stability in potentially unstable situations, said Johnson.

The Colorado ZR2's greater approach and departure angles – 30.7 and 22.7 degrees, respectively, versus the Z71's 25/21 degrees – are enabled by new off-road fascias that drastically reduce front and rear overhang, Johnson said, adding that the fascias also feature integrated, flip-out aluminum tow hooks and the front fascia incorporates a built-in winch.

"The design of the ZR2 concept is all about functionality," said Johnson.

"It is inspired by the needs for traversing rock-strewn trails, as well as the aesthetics of competition-style vehicles such as pre-runners – with all elements contributing to safe, sustainable off-road driving."

The Colorado ZR2 concept's

new 2.8L Duramax diesel packs the power, Johnson said, with an estimated 181 horsepower at 3,400 rpm and 369 lb.-ft. of torque at 2,000 rpm – to tackle the toughest trails.

The 2.8L Duramax diesel is part of a new, global family of turbo-diesel four-cylinder engines designed to deliver more efficient capability, said Johnson, adding that the diesel features a variable-geometry turbocharger for optimal power and efficiency across the rpm band and a balance shaft for greater smoothness.

"While the ZR2 is a concept truck," McKinley said, "the 2.8L engine is very real. It is going into every trim level of the 2016 Colorado pickup next year."

McKinley said that while the ZR2 is a concept truck, great care was taken to make it "real."

"When you talk about concept vehicles, one of two things happens," McKinley said. "Either the design is so 'Star Trekky,' so cartoony that the vehicle looks cool, but it's not taken seriously, or the design is made 'real' and people get a sense of where the future is going."

The ZR2 designers, McKinley said, went for the latter.

They worked hard, he said, to make the truck as real as possible to show the public just what GM could do in the future.

"The media really loved that truck," McKinley said.

"If you look at the big truck sites and blogs like *Jalopnik* that covered the truck, their writers really liked it. But if you drilled down to the comments sections, and I believe the people who make comments can be counted as the 'public,' the responses were also very positive."

While McKinley wouldn't speculate whether the ZR2 might go into production in the future, he said that every concept car that was approved for production had to receive strong support from the public.

"This new Duramax diesel engine will take efficient capability to an entirely new plateau for the midsize truck segment," said Johnson.

"Its broad torque band makes it very powerful at low rpm, while the turbocharged performance provides a confident feeling of immediate and smooth power on demand – attributes customers will appreciate when trailering."



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GM's Wentzville Employees Strive for 'Perfect' Trucks

The men and women launching the new 2015 Chevrolet Colorado and GMC Canyon midsize pickup trucks at General Motors' Wentzville Assembly Plant are proud of their "perfect bodies."

No, not their own bodies that they see in the mirror, but what they're calling the perfect bodies of the new trucks that began production in September.

Engineers at Wentzville used perfectly measured mockups of the trucks' interior and exterior and a sophisticated laser-scanning system to test the fit of parts and assemblies both to the "perfect body" and to other parts to which they connect, said plant spokesman Darin Copeland.

Long before the assembly line started to roll, this process identified and aided in the resolution of mismatches and conflicts involving parts and assemblies coming from five GM plants and as many as 20 different suppliers, Copeland said.

More than 200 parts or assemblies were evaluated using the tools before regular production began. One example was an ill-fitting passenger-side "A-pillar" between the windshield, instrument panel and headliner, Copeland said.

The pillar was disassembled piece by piece, uncovering part

quality, design, and assembly issues. Working with all parties, they were able to fix the issues and refine the production process before the line ran trucks to be shipped to dealers.

"We're working with an entirely new vehicle architecture, as well as the latest technology available for dimensional management," said Bryan Vickery, dimensional engineer for Body Maintenance at Wentzville.

"The process is a big part of delivering improved body structures, which translates to great vehicles to our customers."

The tools are still used in production, where they help identify issues undetectable by the human eye, Vickery said.

"The perfect body process helps everyone by quickly identifying the source of a particular issue and giving us guidance on what needs to be done to fix it," said Mark Deterding, engineering manager for Magna Interiors, a Wentzville supplier.

"We discover potential issues before they can affect the vehicle's quality. We identify solutions and we use them to make sure our solutions work."

"It's an added step, but we're happy to spend time with these perfect bodies because they mean safer, quieter and more reliable vehicles for the customer."



Wentzville engineers made the Canyon body from the inside out.

7 Out of 10 Thieves Prefer F-150 Trucks in Canada

They sure love their Ford trucks up in Canada, or at least car thieves do.

According to a list released by the Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) on Dec. 4, Ford F-250 and F-350 trucks topped the country's "10 Most Frequently Stolen Vehicles" list.

The Top 10 Most Frequently Stolen Vehicles this year in Canada were:

- Ford F-350 SD 4WD PU 2007;
- Ford F-350 SD 4WD PU 2006;
- Ford F-250 SD 4WD PU 2007;
- Cadillac Escalade 4DR 4WD SUV 2003;
- Ford F-350 SD 4WD PU 2005;
- Honda Civic 2DR Coupe 2D 1999;
- Ford F-350 SD 4WD PU 2004;
- Ford F-250 SD 4WD PU 2006;
- Honda Civic SiR 2DR 2D 2000;
- Ford F-350 SD 4WD PU 2003.

"The trend of stolen F-series trucks was also seen in Alberta where there was a 50 percent increase," explained Rick Dubin, vice president, Investigative Services, IBC.

"What's more, for the first time in years, 3 stolen F-series trucks, intended for export, were seized at the ports of Montreal and Halifax."

Given these trends, Dubin believes that the majority of stolen F-series vehicles were most likely re-vin'd – given a false vehicle identification number (VIN) – and sold to unsuspecting consumers.

In addition to the increase in F-series trucks on this year's list,

high-end vehicles, including those made by Lexus, Audi, BMW and Mercedes, were a target for organized criminals who then likely shipped the vehicles to West Africa, Dubin said.

While the incidence of auto theft in Canada has decreased, it is still big business. In 2013, for example, 72,804 vehicles were stolen, an 8 percent drop from the previous year. However, organized criminals are concentrating on acquiring more high-end vehicles.

While most provinces showed a decline in auto theft, Newfoundland and Labrador had a 2 percent increase, Alberta an 11 percent increase and Yukon a 29 percent increase. Recovery rates for stolen vehicles continue to be low.

Club GM Seeks Winter Clothing

Club GM is collecting warm clothing to be donated to the less fortunate.

Club spokesperson Ardin Hammel said the club is looking for new clothing – items such as cold-weather hats, gloves, scarves, shoes and socks and coats. Donations will go to local shelters and are for both children and adults.

Any donations should be dropped off unwrapped at the Club GM store located at the VEC building in the Tech Center no later than Dec. 17. Call 810-217-8064 for more information.

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2015 EQUINOX "LT"

- 2 Yr/24,000 Scheduled Maintenance INCLUDED!
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- OnStar with 4G LTE with built-in Wi-Fi hotspot! • Cruise Control!
- Tilt and Telescopic Steering Column! • Remote Vehicle Entry!
- Aluminum Wheels!
- 36 MPG on the Highway!

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- 7 Passenger Seating! • Tilt and Telescopic Steering Column!
- Remote Vehicle Start and Entry!
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- 18" Machined Aluminum Wheels!
- 24 MPG on the Highway!

Stock# F19743 Was \$34,670

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- "All Star" Edition! • OnStar with 4G LTE with built-in Wi-Fi hotspot!
- Trailering Pkg w/Locking Rear Differential!
- 17" Bright Machined Aluminum Wheels!
- Remote Vehicle Start and Entry!
- Rear Vision Camera!
- 22 MPG on the Highway!

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VYLETEL GMC

2015 GMC YUKON SLE 4X4 LEASE FOR ONLY \$329*/MO

27 MO. LEASE • 10K MILES PER YEAR
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3.6L SIDI V6 engine, Intergrated exhaust tips, 18" Painted aluminum wheels.

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FREE Maintenance • FREE XM Radio! • FREE OnStar

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HUGE SAVINGS

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Publicis Named Cadillac's New Advertising Agency

Cadillac has recently appointed Publicis Worldwide as its global creative agency of record.

Publicis Worldwide is based in Paris, France, and is the largest creative agency of the Publicis Group network.

Its appointment to the Cadillac program became effective Dec. 4.

A fully dedicated team, comprising key managers from Publicis Worldwide, will lead the account and have access to specialist and premium resources within the larger Publicis Groupe, said David Caldwell, manager of Cadillac Communications.

"This appointment is designed to accelerate the global expansion and elevation of Cadillac into a truly global luxury brand," said Cadillac chief marketing officer Uwe Ellinghaus in a statement to the press.

"We have spent much of this year refocusing on the core values of our brand.

"Adding Publicis Worldwide to our team - with its undisputed expertise in luxury brand building - will further our progress globally."

Arthur Sadoun, CEO of Publicis Worldwide added: "For us, this appointment is an honor and a privilege. We will work passionately with the client leadership team to strengthen the power of the Cadillac brand."

Cadillac's creative and strategic agency of record since 2013 had been Lowe and Partners, part of the Interpublic Group of Companies.

"We sincerely appreciate the dedication and service the Lowe team has brought to our brand," Ellinghaus said.

"The agency has aided Cadillac in a time of transition and

contributed significantly to the development of its brand positioning."

"The change goes into effect immediately," Caldwell said, "but in cases like this, there is normally a transition period."

"Publicis is based in Paris, but the location of one's head office didn't play a role in the decision. All the big ad agencies have offices around the world these days."

Caldwell said that the Cadillac account was not put into review as is often the case when a company changes ad agencies.

"We didn't put the job out for bid," Caldwell said. "This wasn't that."

"I would say that this is just one of many changes that is taking place within Cadillac."

"First and foremost, we have expanded our portfolio. And we're elevating the brand name and this is the agency that we've picked to help us to do that and go forward with our plans for the future, which have been recently talked about."

Caldwell said that the changes Cadillac has made include moving the brand's headquarters to New York City earlier this year.

Ellinghaus joined the company as CMO in January. Later that month, the company changed its logo.

Ellinghaus succeeded Don Butler, who had been in the position for nine months.

In July, former Infiniti president Johan de Nysschen was appointed president at Cadillac.

"This move just follows suit with the upward trajectory that Cadillac is currently on to improve the brand," Caldwell said.

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Corvette Z06s Head for Chevy Dealerships

Chevrolet is now shipping the 2015 Corvette Z06 coupe from Bowling Green Assembly, and some early customers could receive the much-anticipated car later this week.

"It has been an incredible opportunity to work on Chevy's most capable model," said Jeff Lamarche, plant manager of General Motors' Bowling Green Assembly plant. "It truly is an amazing car, and we're thrilled to get them into the hands of our eager customers."

The new Corvette Z06 offers the most choice for customers in the model's history, said GM spokesperson Monte Doran.

"It is the first Z06 to offer an available eight-speed paddle-shift automatic transmission and, thanks to a stronger aluminum frame, a removable roof panel," Doran said.

"Also, it is the first time since 1963 that the Z06 is available as a convertible – which will arrive in early 2015."

The new 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 – making the 2015 Corvette Z06 the most powerful production car ever from General Motors and one of the most powerful production cars available in the United States, Doran said.

To balance performance and efficiency, the LT4 leverages a trio of advanced technologies – direct injection, active fuel management (cylinder deactivation) and continuously variable valve timing – with a new, more efficient supercharger.

"The LT4 helps make the Corvette Z06 the most capable car in the brand's history," Doran said. "The Z06 accelerates from a rest to 60 mph in only 2.95 seconds when equipped with the all-new, available eight-speed auto-



2015 Corvettes leave Bowling Green for dealer delivery.

matic transmission – and achieves it in 3.2 seconds with the standard seven-speed manual transmission.

"A quarter-mile sprint takes just 10.95 seconds with the eight-speed automatic and 11.2 seconds with the seven-speed manual. With both versions, the Corvette Z06 hits 127 mph at the end of the quarter-mile."

When it comes to braking performance, the Z06 can stop from 60 mph in only 99.6 feet, Doran said. That's the best braking performance of any production car GM has ever tested. Additionally, the Corvette Z06 achieves 1.2 g's in lateral acceleration compared with the Corvette's previous best 1.13 g's.

All test results were achieved with Z06 coupes fitted with the Z07 Performance package, which adds Brembo carbon ceramic brake rotors and Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tires, Doran said. The Z07 package also features the most aggressive aerodynamic package available on the Corvette Z06. He said it delivers the most downforce of any production car GM has ever tested.

The Z06 also offers the industry-first Performance Data Recorder – or PDR – which enables users to record high-definition video, with telemetry overlays, of their driving experiences on and off the track. The racing-derived system is included with the available navigation system,

Suburban Buys Ford Dealer

The Suburban Collection has acquired Ed Schmid Ford in Ferndale.

"We look forward to serving Ford buyers and owners in Ferndale and surrounding communities," said David T. Fischer, chairman and CEO, The Suburban Collection.

"Our goal, as always, is to offer an outstanding experience to each and every one of our customers."

Located at 21600 Woodward Avenue, Suburban Ford of Ferndale has 52 employees in its sales, service and body shop operations.

The additional dealership expands the company's retail business in this revitalized community, Fischer said. Suburban Buick GMC of Ferndale, also located on Woodward Avenue, began operations in early 2012.

The purchase caps a year of growth for The Suburban Collection, Fischer said. Since January, the company has added Suburban Chevrolet of Clinton, Mercedes-Benz of Ann Arbor, BMW of Ann Arbor, Suburban Cadillac of Plymouth and Suburban Cadillac of Lansing.

The company has also invested more than \$28 million in new and expanded facilities in the metropolitan Detroit area, including a \$15 million Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram dealership in Farmington Hills and an \$8 million Toyota Scion dealership in Troy.

Headquartered in Troy, The

Suburban Collection is the 18th largest dealer group in the United States and began operations in 1948. Employing more than 2,000 individuals, primarily in Michigan, the company also has operations in California, Illinois, Wisconsin and Florida.

State Funds Will Go to Companies To Aid Employees

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) – Officials say 13 Oakland County companies are getting money from a state fund to hire roughly 1,300 workers and upgrade current employees' skills.

The companies are getting about \$700,000 from the state's Skilled Trades Training Fund. The money will be used to train about 700 current employees in such areas as software programming, computer-aided design and welding and robot operations.

The recipients have agreed to contribute nearly \$3 million in matching job-training funds to help prepare their workers.

Companies receiving the most funding were automotive suppliers Magna International and Brose. Among other recipients are Beaumont Health System and engineering and robotics firm GableTEK.

County executive L. Brooks Patterson says the program "creates some huge return on our investment."

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Chevrolet's 2015 Bi-Fuel Impala Shows It Can Handle Even a Speeding Bullet

Being able to take a bullet and not quit is a sign of toughness.

That's just what the 2015 Bi-Fuel Chevrolet Impala's CNG tank does.

And, it withstands blazing fires from multiple directions.

Bullet and fire tests are conducted on the Bi-Fuel Impala's compressed natural gas (CNG) tank, which is what sets it apart from less strenuous testing of other natural gas-powered vehicles.

A large piece of cast aluminum in the Impala helps protect the tank valve and connection from certain side impacts, said GM spokesman Chad Lyons. Sheet metal plates on either side of the tank help protect it from loose objects in the trunk or rear seat.

"We designed this system for those 'what if' situations," said Nichole Kraatz, Impala chief engineer. "The customer shouldn't even know it's there. They shouldn't even think about it. CNG should just be another fuel they use to power their vehicle."

Lyons added, "We wanted to

tell people the story of how we go above and beyond the call of duty to show that this vehicle is safe.

"There are certain safety testing protocols that we are obliged to follow to demonstrate vehicle safety. But we performed other safety tests – the bonfire test for example – that are not mandated by law."

The bonfire test, Lyons said, is an industry test where a steady flame of 800 degrees Fahrenheit is placed four inches from the tank.

These tests, Lyons said, are performed to show the public just how safe this Bi-Fuel Impala is.

Bi-fuel vehicles are currently very popular with fleet operations, Lyons said. There is only one passenger vehicle, made by Honda, available to the public.

Durability and safety testing at the tank's normal operating pressure of 3,600 PSI and higher subjected it to normal and extreme situations, exceeding federal requirements and CNG industry guidelines.

Examples are:

- The industry-standard Bonfire Test confirms the CNG tank's pressure relief valves are operational and help prevent the tank from rupturing in a fire.

In addition to placing the tank about four inches above a steady 800-degree Fahrenheit fire, General Motors' engineers added trunk, back seat and underbody fires to test the pressure relief valves' ability to sense heat on all sides of the tank.

And, the blazing fire tests were done at two different fuel levels.

- In the Penetration Test, the tank is filled to its service pressure and is shot with a 7.62 mm armor-piercing bullet.

In order to pass the test, the bullet has to pass completely through one side of the tank without exiting out the other side.

The goal is to have the tank maintain the bullet hole only as the weak structural point, without rupturing.

- Front barrier, side impact



Impala's CNG tank is intact after crash test at GM Proving Ground.

and rear impact crash tests were conducted on the Bi-Fuel Impala.

The Bi-Fuel Impala – a 2015 "Green Car of the Year" finalist – is the auto-industry's only manufacturer-produced full-size sedan in North America that runs on both CNG and gasoline.

It is available through all Chevrolet dealerships in the U.S. and Canada with delivery expected at the end of this year.

The all-steel trunk-mounted CNG tank holds approximately 7.8 gallons, sufficient for about 150 miles of driving, after which the Impala seamlessly switches to gasoline power.

The complete CNG system is covered by Chevrolet's five-year, 100,000-mile – whichever comes first – limited powertrain warranty.

It can be serviced at Chevrolet dealerships throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Mopar Prepares Customers For Frosty Winter Problems

Colder weather has arrived, with pothole season right behind.

Now customers can avoid being left out in the cold when roads get rough, said Chrysler spokesperson Beth Ann Bayus, thanks to Mopar Vehicle Protection (MVP) Road Hazard Tire & Wheel Plans, which offer extra coverage in the event of pothole, curb and other road hazard damage, as well as with Mopar all-weather accessories that help defend against Mother Nature's harsher elements.

"Our MVP Road Hazard Tire & Wheel Plans provide coverage from pothole damage and more without putting a hole in your pocketbook," said Pietro Gorlier, CEO – Mopar Service, Parts and Customer Care.

"In addition to the extra protection provided by MVP Plans, Mopar also offers a full complement of all-weather accessories to get you where you need to go during the cold-weather driving season."

Winter months are particularly hard on vehicles, Gorlier said, and roads can be devastating to tires and wheels.

Mopar Vehicle Protection (MVP) Road Hazard Tire & Wheel Plans, available exclusively through company dealerships and FIAT Studios, can be purchased with coverage ranging from one to seven years.

Drivers can rest assured that with an MVP Road Hazard Protection Plan, Gorlier said, their vehicles' tires and wheels will be repaired with no hassle and minimum expense.

The MVP Road Hazard Tire & Wheel Plan provides full repair or replacement costs up to \$1,500 per year for all four tires and wheels.

That's not just for factory wheels, but for aftermarket wheels as well, Gorlier said.

Plans may be purchased at any time in a vehicle's life and cover damage from curbs, potholes, and other road hazard conditions. The MVP Road Hazard Protection Plan also covers the cost of mounting, balancing and stems. And if the tire pressure sensor gauge is damaged due to a road hazard, that's covered, too.

The plan even provides \$100 "Sign-And-Go" towing and roadside assistance, all with a \$0 deductible per repair visit.

The MVP Road Hazard Tire & Wheel Protection Plan also offers the choice of a Customer Con-

venience Package that provides additional coverage, including:

- \$35 First Day Rental (or taxi reimbursement in lieu of rental);
- \$35/Day Car Rental Allowance (or taxi reimbursement in lieu of rental);
- \$1,000 Trip Interruption Coverage.

All 2003 model-year (or newer) vehicles, with no more than 125,000 miles, are eligible for MVP Road Hazard Tire & Wheel Plans. Plans cannot be sold on vehicles with a new or pre-owned major plan. The effective date and mileage are based on the plan sale date and odometer reading at time of the plan purchase. Restrictions may apply in some states.

Gorlier said Mopar protection extends beyond road plans. Owners also can choose from a full catalog of Mopar accessories to cope with most anything Mother Nature dishes out over the coming months.

For a clear view of the road ahead, the Mopar heated windshield washer solvent kit warms up washer solution to help eliminate visual distractions such as ice, snow and frost, Gorlier said. The Mopar heated windshield washer solvent kit activates shortly after vehicle startup, and includes all applicable wiring and equipment.

When cold days come, owners can start their vehicles from the comfort of their homes or offices with the Mopar Remote Start system.

The fully integrated, OEM-tested system starts vehicles from as far away as 300 feet with just the push of a button.

The Mopar Remote Start system is designed to work with Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram or Fiat brand vehicles and interfaces seamlessly with the vehicle's electronic security key.

Those who view powder on the mountains as a call to arms can pursue their active lifestyle with an assist from the Mopar Ski and Snowboard Rack, Gorlier said.

The rack securely carries skis or snowboards on a rack that easily installs on Mopar or Thule crossbars. An oversized push button allows for easy opening while wearing gloves.

And when owners are finished on the slopes, Mopar All-Weather Slush Mats feature molded, deep ribs to protect a vehicle's carpet and keep it clean by trapping and holding water, snow and mud from winter boots.

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Auto Sales 'Very Healthy' – GM's McNeil

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

November since 2010, McNeil said.

"The buzz around Black Friday helped drive strong showroom traffic but there was a lot more work in the market," said McNeil.

"More people have jobs and job security, their wages are starting to increase, household wealth is growing and low pump prices look like they're here to stay through 2015. All of this helped deliver an exceptional month and it will help keep auto sales at very healthy levels going forward."

Additional November highlights (vs. 2013 except as noted):
At Chevrolet –

- The Cruze was up 26 percent, Spark was up 64 percent, Sonic was up 3 percent;
- Silverado was up 24 percent;
- Tahoe was up 10 percent and Traverse was up 14 percent.

Dealers delivered 2,366 new Colorados, ahead of plan, with a low retail days supply of 21 days.

GMC was up 23 percent, Sierra 57 percent and Yukon 14 percent.

The Terrain was up 13 percent and 854 new Canyons were deliv-

ered, which is ahead of plan, according to McNeil.

Buick was up 27 percent, Encore 72 percent, LaCrosse 71 percent and Verano 22 percent.

Cadillac Escalade deliveries were up 75 percent, with the retail days supply very tight at 16 days. Sales of the CTS sedan increased 18 percent.

GM has now posted 26 consecutive months of year-over-year average transaction price (ATP) increases on the strength of new pickup trucks, SUVs and Cadillacs, McNeil said.

ATPs were a record \$35,600, according to J.D. Power PIN mid-month estimates, up \$790 per unit compared to October and up \$3,100 versus a year ago.

Month over month, GM reduced incentive spending as a percentage of ATPs more than the industry average, according

to PIN mid-month estimates, and the company has had the lowest incentives of all domestic automakers on an ATP basis in nine of the last 11 months.

GM's November incentive spending as a percentage of ATPs was 10.4 percent, down 1.2 points month over month, while industry average spending was 9.6 percent of ATP, down 0.1 points.

In November 2013, GM's incentive spending was 10.2 percent of ATP, and the industry average was 9.7 percent, McNeil said. Fleet sales were up 11 percent.

Commercial sales were up 1 percent, marking the 13th consecutive month of year-over-year growth.

Large SUV commercial fleet sales were up 87 percent and full-size pickup commercial sales were up 47 percent.

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Mustang Sales

In November

Best in 8 Years

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

14,949 vehicles marks a 13 percent increase, making this Explorer's best November performance since 2004.

"It was our best November performance for Explorer going all the way back to 2004," said Merkle, "so the new Explorer just continues to make gains in the marketplace. There is no other SUV since its launch in 1990 that have sold more than the Ford Explorer."

"We've sold over seven million Ford Explorers since 1990."

Merkle was pleased to announce that Mustang surpassed the 8,000-vehicle sales mark in November, with a total 8,728 cars sold.

Adding to the good news, Merkle said that the Mustang's largest markets, Texas and California, saw retail sales increases of 46 percent and 76 percent, respectively.

"So when you take a look at Mustang sales for the month, we totaled a 62 percent increase and we've performed so well in markets like Texas and California," Merkle said.

"Texas is our largest Mustang market and retail sales were up 46 percent. And in California, our second largest market for Mustang, we saw sales increase 76 percent, and eight-days-to-turn for Mustang right now on dealer lots, so they're moving very quickly for us and it's really welcome news."

The Lincoln brand, Merkle said, saw sales of 8,113 vehicles, which provided a 21 percent gain and resulted in the brand's best November sales in seven years, Merkle said. Lincoln MKC sales represent its second month above the 2,000-vehicle mark, with 2,152 vehicles sold as it continues to strengthen the brand overall.

In other Lincoln sales news, the 2015 SUV Navigator was up 88 percent with sales of 1,433 vehicles, representing Navigator's best November sales since the year 2007.

"The brand was up 21 percent and year to date it's up 15 percent. We had another really strong month for MKC with over 2,000 vehicles sold," Merkle said.

"And we are very pleased that we sold 1,433 Navigators, up 88 percent. That's our new Navigator, so it's resonating very well with the luxury customers."

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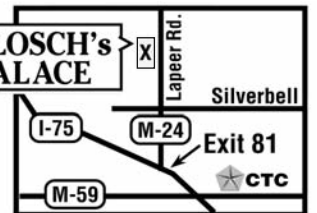
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