

GM Trans Employees Give Their Time, Effort to Toys for Tots

They may not look like Santa's elves, but the UAW Local 909 employees at GM's Warren Transmission are making sure that a lot of Detroit-area kids have toys under the tree this Christmas morning.

John Giannetti, UAW Local 909 event coordinator, said they've been holding fundraisers to raise money for the Marine Corps' Toys for Tots program for a while now.

"This is something we do every year," Giannetti said. "The people at the plant really get behind this effort. We have a golf outing where the money raised goes to this charity."

"Toys for Tots is just one of four charities we raise money for all year long. The others are the March of Dimes, the United Negro College Fund and the American Cancer Society's Breast Cancer Awareness Fund."

The plant's Professional Managers Network also holds fundraisers throughout the year to help the Toys for Tots effort.

"We sell \$5 box lunches at the plant," said Renee Gaynor, program chair. "We don't have hot food services here, so selling lunch makes sense. We make the sandwiches and the chips. The pop is donated by Continental Food Services."

Giannetti estimates that they

collected enough cash to purchase \$15,000 in toys.

"We raised about \$6,000 from various fundraisers, but we also weren't shy about walking the floor and asking people to donate cash," Giannetti said.

Gaynor pointed out that in addition to employees at the plant

donating their time and money, their efforts to raise funds for Toys for Tots have been helped by donations from vendors, suppliers and contractors.

"They deserve some credit for this as well," Gaynor said.

"This is a project where everyone is happy to get involved."

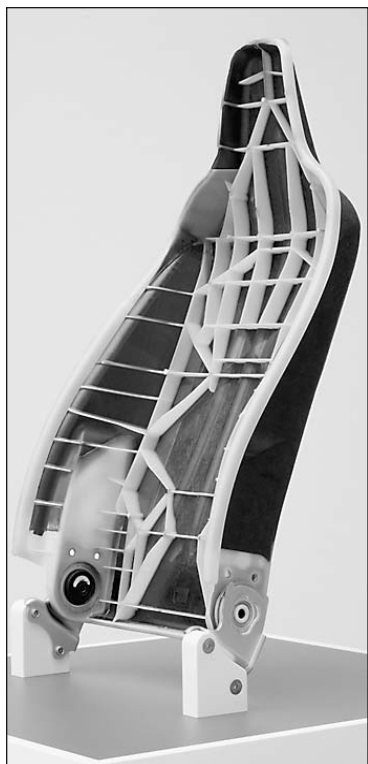
Speaking to a crowd of Warren Transmission employees, Sgt. Nicholas Witt of the Marine Corps' 124th Reserve out of Selfridge said that when his group started up the local Toys for Tots campaign seven years ago, most participants were "mom and pop" businesses.

But, Witt said, over the past few years, bigger businesses started getting involved.

"I'm glad to see more and more people participating," Witt said. "You guys are the ones who are donating your time and money and making a brighter future for the kids."



Warren Transmission employees, U.S. marines and Santa with Toys for Tots gifts



Cutout of new car seat

Johnson Controls Awarded for Improving Vehicle Seats

Johnson Controls is reducing the use of metals used in vehicle seat structures by replacing them with multi-material systems in its CAMISMA research project.

CAMISMA, the Johnson Controls engineers say, stands for "carbon-amide-metal-based interior structure using a multi-material system approach."

For this cutting-edge work, Johnson Controls, a global multi-industrial company, received this year's CLEPA (European Association of Automotive Suppliers) Innovation Award in the "Green" category, said Johnson Controls spokesperson Mary Kay Doder.

The CLEPA judges said the project represents an "outstanding, future-oriented solution for sustainable carbon dioxide reduction."

These seats are more than 40 percent lighter than convention-

ally manufactured seat structures and equally as safe, Doder said.

"Although carbon-fiber products generally offer outstanding characteristics, such as great strength and design flexibility, they are too expensive for use in the large-scale series production of vehicles," said Andreas Eppinger, group vice president of Technology Management at Johnson Controls Automotive Experience.

"With CAMISMA, our goal was to create cost-efficient, sustainable access to carbon-fiber-based materials systems."

This was achieved by an innovative industrial manufacturing process for volume production with about 200,000 units per production line, allowing for the first time the highly concentrated, efficient use of carbon fiber, while at the same time meeting all safety requirements.

The results of an initial rear-impact crash test demonstrated that the CAMISMA seat prototype satisfied all of the strength requirements of current seats built with a metal structure in large-scale series production, Eppinger said.

In addition to significant weight savings, CAMISMA offers a further advantage: The manufacturing steps required in assembly are substantially reduced through the number of attachment parts needed, which also saves cost, Doder said.

These seats will be available in vehicles in 2019.

"The reason it seems like we're taking so long to get the seats into vehicles is because of auto development cycles," Doder said, "which are about three or four years."

"We just finished the research that shows how safe the seats are, and it's just been validated

through awards like the one we received from CLEPA."

It is vitally important in this day and age to be able to demonstrate that a new kind of seat is as safe as what it would be replacing, Doder said. Right now, automakers are paying special attention to safety concerns because of recent problems in the industry.

"And another advantage to our seats is, lighter means thinner, and that gives us the chance to have more leg room in the back seat," Doder said.

"That's really important in a market like China where many executives have drivers, so these executives sit in the back. Having some more leg room for them becomes very important."

Doder said Johnson Controls will be showing off the new seats at the upcoming North American International Auto Show in Detroit in January.

Urban Wheels Names F-150 'Truck of Year'

by Jim Stickford

Frank Sinatra's old song, "It Was a Very Good Year," could have been sung for this year's Ford F-150.

The pickup's aluminum body led the Urban Wheels awards judges to choose the F-150 as its "Truck of the Year."

The Urban Wheels awards, announced Dec. 11, are given out by *Decisive Magazine*. The judging panel picked the three winning vehicles based on style and practicality, said magazine spokesperson Jessica Pipkins.

Juror Mary Chapman said among the factors that put the F-150 over the top was its "poten-

tially revolutionary use of aluminum," which provided substantial weight loss and contributed to the truck's "great mileage" statistics.

Pipkins said that naming the F-150 shouldn't be that much of a shock given the fact that it's been redesigned using aluminum bodies. It's also been America's "favorite truck" for many years.

"I don't think too many people were surprised with this choice," Pipkins said. "But there have been so many advances in truck technology, and trucks from all the automakers have become so good that I wouldn't be surprised if our jurors weren't a little surprised that the F-150 kept up with

other trucks in terms of quality and technology.

"This is still a truck that people want to use for business and for personal reasons."

The BMW i8 was named Green Vehicle of the Year by jurors. *Decisive Magazine* editor Brian Armstead said, "when BMW enters the game, watch out."

"Not only is the BMW i8 'green,' it's a BMW, with amazing acceleration, fuel efficiency and 'Ultimate Driving Machine' road manners."

The Kia K900 was named the Urban Wheels Car of the Year. Jurors cited its understated elegance "that speaks of the owner being a savvy, trendy profession-



2015 F-150

al" as among the chief reasons for picking the Kia K900.

"The goal was to find the vehicle that was appropriately affordable and appealing to the eyes," Pipkins said.

The Urban Wheels awards will be presented to the winners at the 19th annual Urban Wheels Celebration to be held in the Garden Theater in Detroit on Sunday, Jan. 11.

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Ford is Recalling More Vehicles for Airbag Problems

At the request of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Ford is expanding its recall on Takata driver-side airbag inflators.

The recall includes approximately 502,489 vehicles, an addition of approximately 447,310 vehicles, said Ford spokesperson Kelli Felker, in a statement to the media.

This brings the total number of Ford vehicles being recalled for Takata airbag inflators to approximately 538,977.

This expanded recall includes 2005-08 Ford Mustang vehicles built Aug. 18, 2004 to June 25, 2007, at Flat Rock Assembly Plant and 2005-20 Ford GT vehicles built Feb. 11, 2005, to Jan. 30, 2006, at Wixom Assembly Plant.

As of Dec. 18, 2014, Felker said, Ford is aware of approximately 462,900 vehicles in the United States, approximately 27,500 in Canada and approximately 7,600 in Mexico affected by this recall. Approximately 4,500 additional vehicles outside of North America are also included in this action.

Felker said Ford is aware of one accident with an injury that may be related to this condition. Dealers will replace the airbag inflator at no cost to the customer.

Takata Ad States Airbag 'Failure Is Unacceptable'

In a move seldom seen, automotive supplier Takata placed a full-page ad in the *Detroit Free Press* Dec. 18 describing what the company is doing to correct problems from Takata's airbag inflators.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, defective passenger side airbag inflators have been linked to several injuries and deaths.

In the newspaper ad, Takata CEO Shigehisa Takada stated, "Today we are as focused on our mission as ever. Even one failure is unacceptable and we are truly and deeply saddened that five fatalities have been attributed to auto accidents where Takata airbags malfunctioned."

Takada goes on to say that the company will work in unison with its automaker customers "to advance our common goal of putting the safety of customers first."

Mark Rosekind Appointed to Lead NHTSA's Revitalization

WASHINGTON (AP) – The Senate on Dec. 16 confirmed a new administrator to lead the government's auto safety agency, which faces complaints that regulators bungled two high-profile recalls involving faulty ignition switches and exploding air bags.

Mark Rosekind, 59, a leading expert on human fatigue, was approved by voice vote to head the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a neglected but critically important agency that is widely considered to be understaffed and underfunded. The previous administrator, David Strickland, left in January.

Rosekind is currently a member of the National Transportation Safety Board, which investigates transportation accidents, and has led seven major investigations. While at the board, he persuaded fellow board members to make a controversial recommendation that U.S. states lower the blood alcohol limit for drivers from 0.08 to 0.05. The

lower intoxication threshold would bring the U.S. more in line with other countries, but is strongly opposed by the alcohol, restaurant and entertainment industries. So far, no state has adopted the recommendation.

The biggest issue facing Rosekind at the agency will be revitalizing its oversight of auto recalls because of safety defects. The agency has been roundly criticized for not recognizing for years dangerous defects that caused ignition switches of some General Motors cars to suddenly shut off, and Takata air bags to spew shrapnel when inflated. Lawmakers complain the agency is neither feared nor respected by the auto industry.

Automakers have recalled a record 55 million cars and trucks in the U.S. so far this year, the most since the previous high of 30.8 million vehicles in 2004. At least 42 people have been killed as a result of the faulty GM ignition switches.

A recall of exploding Takata air bags may be the largest recall in the auto safety agency's history.

The agency was slow to respond to consumer complaints about the ignition switches, say safety advocates and members of Congress. GM knew for at least a decade that the switches were dangerous, but failed to recall cars until last February. Agency officials have said GM hid important information from the regulator.

Takata's air bags were sold to at least 10 automakers. Even though deaths and injuries were reported as early as 2008, the agency let automakers do a series of small recalls. It didn't open a full investigation until June and only recently became aggressive in seeking nationwide recalls.

Rosekind "is prepared for the job ahead and I expect him to be relentless in the pursuit of safety," Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said following the

Senate's confirmation. Rosekind said he appreciated the Senate's swift action on his nomination and plans to work closely with Congress to advance Foxx's "vision to raise the bar on safety."

Rosekind has a doctoral degree in psychology from Yale University and is a former director of Stanford University's Center for Human Sleep Research. In the 1990s, he conducted groundbreaking research for NASA of airline pilots and how they were affected by lack of sleep. He created Alertness Solutions, a consulting firm on fatigue issues, in 1998 and was appointed to the transportation safety board in 2010.

GM Fatalities Upped to 42

DETROIT (AP) – At least 42 people have died and 58 have been 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. 15.

Feinberg says he has received 251 death claims and 2,075 injury claims since August.

The fund so far has deemed a total of 100 claims eligible for compensation.

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.

Vehicle Recalls for Airbags Total 14 Million

TOKYO (AP) – Honda, Nissan and Mitsubishi announced more recalls for some possibly defective Takata air bags that Toyota recalled earlier this month after one exploded during scrapping in Japan.

Nissan Motor Co. said Dec. 11 it's recalling the Presage, X-Trail and other models totaling 83,000 vehicles in Japan, some 6,000 in China, another 49,000 in Europe and 14,000 in other regions. A recall is coming in North America, but details weren't decided.

The recall by Nissan and other Japanese automakers is meant to address possible problems with passenger side air bags.

Japanese supplier Takata Corp. is under fire for air bag inflators that can explode, shooting out metal and plastic pieces. At least five deaths and dozens of injuries have been linked to the problem worldwide.

Honda Motor Co. is recalling 400,000 vehicles worldwide for

the Fit, Stream, CR-V and other models. That includes 175,000 in Japan; 6,000 in North America, excluding the U.S. where a recall has already been carried out; 16,000 in South America; 100,000 in Europe; 70,000 in Asia and 30,000 in other regions.

Mitsubishi Motors Corp. recalled 300 Lancer cars in Japan. Mitsubishi said the comparable recall has already been carried out in the U.S.

That brings recalls in Japan over Takata air bags to 3.05 million vehicles. Globally, they total more than 14 million.

No injuries or accidents have been reported related to the latest problem air bags, the ministry said.

The explosion that sparked the recall for passenger side air bags occurred in November in a scrapyard in Gifu Prefecture, central Japan, in a Toyota vehicle.

Japan's transport ministry said last week there were six earlier

instances when Takata air bags exploded during scrapping, two in Toyota vehicles and four in Honda vehicles. They all occurred in 2012.

In Japan, air bags are deliberately deployed during scrapping. Toyota recalled 185,000 vehicles in Japan and 5,000 in China for possibly defective passenger-side air bags Dec. 4.

Honda has the largest number of Takata-related recalls, as half of its vehicles are equipped with Takata air bags. The recalls total 5.4 million in the U.S. for Honda.

Honda has expanded its recall in the U.S., previously limited to high-humidity areas, to the entire country, and says it will apply that recall worldwide as well.



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Champagne's Toasts Newest Feature – a Craft Beer Bar

by Jim Stickford

Talk about rolling out the barrel.

That's exactly what they did at Champagne's Wine Cellar on Chicago Road, across from the GM Tech Center in Warren.

The owners of the venerable wine store – Dean, Chris and George Champagne – added a bar that sells craft beer and ales.

"The retail store, which sells wine, liquor, craft beers and cheeses, was first opened in 1976," said Chris Champagne.

"We opened up the bar a couple of months ago. This allows us to cross-market and cross-sell beers and ales we carry in our retail store."

Champagne said that when they opened the store back in the 1970s, it made sense to specialize in wine. But, over the years, tastes changed and the craft beer industry took off.

"Michigan has really come a long way when it comes to craft beer," Champagne said. "I've heard that we're fourth in terms of craft beer, behind Colorado, Oregon and, I think, California."

"Whatever the case is, there are a lot of local craft brewers in the state. So when we were look-

ing for ways to expand, adding a bar that would carry these craft beers made perfect sense."

Many of the beers they have at the new bar, they also carry at their store, Champagne said. And the beers they don't have for retail sale, they often have beers from the same brewers who make what is on tap.

"We do a lot of limited releases," Champagne said. "Things that are hard to find at stores or other bars – or regional beers like Dogfish and Stone."

Champagne said that while the bar is new, it isn't the first time the store offered something extra.

"We had a restaurant here in the mid-1980s," Champagne said. "We shut it down because it was expensive to operate and decided to expand the retail side of the business. I will also say that we don't make our own beer and have no plans to do so."

The feedback from the public has been terrific, Champagne said. The comment most heard from customers, he said, is that they're surprised at all the variety of brew that are offered at the bar. He added that customers have also said that they loved the idea of being able to taste a



Chris, left, and George Champagne at their new bar

beer, and if they liked it, being able to buy it from the retail side of the operation.

"People have also told me that they like the fact that the bar is quiet and that they can have a conversation," Champagne said. "It's in a personalized environment that's intimate."

Champagne said they rotate the beers that are served at the bar, so that there's always something new to try. He said the biggest surprise is how many good local brews there are in Michigan.

The craft beer industry here has taken off and Champagne's offers customers a chance to sample what's out there.

"We serve some beers that can't be found in a bottle," Champagne said. "But thanks to us, our customers are now able to try these beers. Right now, the three

most popular beers we have on tap are Founders, Bell's and Short's."

Many of the Wine Cellar's customers work at GM's Tech Center, Champagne said. They have also created a room that can be rented out, where people can sample wine, cheese and beer.

"We always do well with that room during sporting events," Champagne said. "Lately, with the Lions winning, we've done well on the Sundays they play."

"I would say we're a neighborhood place, but we're starting to get people from all over metro Detroit stopping by. We're becoming a bit of a destination."

"We're even getting people from around the state and outside Michigan. When people have relatives visit, they bring them here."

Warren Library Offers Exciting Events for 2015

The new year will bring new events to the Warren Public Library.

On Thursday, Jan. 16, at 6 p.m. the main branch of the library is hosting a class on Chinese face reading, which will be taught by Lin Klaassen.

"According to ancient Chinese face-reading principles, each part of the face corresponds directly to a part or area of the body," said librarian Kathleen Faba. "Our bodies try to talk to us through our faces, telling us what the body needs and the challenges it is facing. All we have to do is observe and read the messages our faces present to us. Face-reading expert and business and jury consultant Lin Klaassen will be with us to teach about this fascinating subject."

On Thursday, Jan. 27, pianist Matthew Ball, also known as the Boogie Woogie Kid, "will blow the lid off the Warren Civic Library," said Faba.

"Remarkably, Ball's start in jazz only began in 2001 when he attended a hometown boogie-woogie festival," Faba said. "He was so awestruck by the performances he saw, he left his career as an attorney and became a blues & boogie-woogie performing artist."

Space is limited. Call 586-574-4564 to reserve a spot.

Together, They Did – Help Feed the Hungry

Art Van Furniture and WXYZ-TV/Channel 7 – in a "Together We Can" food drive – collected more than 20,000 pounds of packaged and canned food in November to help feed families in need this holiday season.

Thanks to the generosity of its guests and team members, the furniture/mattress retailer and the TV station donated the non-perishable food items to Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan.

Approximately 17,200 meals will be served during the holiday season because of the donations.

"While the need is great, the generosity of metro Detroiters is even greater," said Gary Van Elslander, president of Art Van Furniture.

"The overwhelming response this year to the 'Art Van Furniture and WXYZ-TV/Channel 7 Together We Can' program to feed the hungry is a testament to the big hearts and giving spirit that

is alive and well in our stores and in our community."

Gerry Brisson, president of Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan, said, "Without advocates like Art Van Furniture and WXYZ-TV/Channel 7 in our community, Gleaners would not be able to distribute enough food to those in need each year."

"They support our mission to nourish communities by feeding hungry people."

The nonprofit organization has been feeding the hungry across metro Detroit for more than 37 years, Brisson said. One out of every four households in Michigan faces hunger.

Gleaners Community Food Bank distributes 41,000 pounds of emergency food each year to more than 550 soup kitchens, shelters and pantries in Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Livingston and Monroe counties.

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Wrapping Up the Needy For Winter is Ford's Goal

Ford and the Ford Fund wrapped up their fourth annual "Coat & Jacket Drive" Dec. 16 by delivering more than 1,000 new and gently used coats, along with hats, scarves and gloves, to the Salvation Army.

The coats and other items were donated by local Ford employees and brought to the Salvation Army in two new Ford Transit vans, said Ford spokesperson Todd Nissen. The Salvation Army will distribute the items to needy families in the Detroit area.

"Surviving the cold of a Michigan winter means bundling up in a warm coat with a hat and gloves," said Janet Lawson, director of the Ford Volunteer Corps.

"Unfortunately, many of our

neighbors struggle each day to stay warm and to find enough food, and we're hoping we can help ease that burden."

The coats and other clothing donations are the latest from Ford and its philanthropic arm, the Ford Motor Company Fund, to give back to the communities where Ford employees live and work, Nissen said. In the past few weeks, more than 700 Ford employees volunteered in 50 community service projects in eight states as part of its quarterly Accelerated Action Day.

So far this year, more than 27,000 Ford employees and retirees have volunteered on community service projects around the world.



Ford volunteers, in blue shirts, work with Salvation Army employees to distribute winter wear to the needy.



Clark Freeman speaks at GM Foundation presentation ceremony.

Two Romulus Nonprofits Granted \$10,000

The General Motors Foundation has donated \$10,000 to two nonprofit organizations in the Romulus community through the Plant City Grants program.

Romulus Community Schools received \$7,500 and Starfish Family Services was granted \$2,500, said GM spokesperson Kevin Nadrowski.

Starfish provides early childhood and parenting programs, children's mental health services, after-school programs and an emergency shelter for teens and youth in crises.

"This year, the GM Foundation will provide more than \$1.7 million in funding to 209 organizations in 45 plant cities where GM employees live and work," said GM Foundation vice president Lori Wingerter.

"Through these grants, we continue our mission to give back and build stronger communities where GM does business."

This is the fourth consecutive year the GM Foundation has issued Plant City Grants in the Romulus area, Nadrowski said.

The Foundation's funding in support of the community totals \$40,000 during that period.

The grant presentation took place at the Romulus Powertrain plant Dec. 10.

During the event, guests were provided a manufacturing update and plant tour, showcasing project work and demonstrations from recent investment into the facility.

Speaking to the plant's employees at the presentation, Romulus Powertrain Plant Manager Clark Freeman said, "It is important that we are good community neighbors and these grants provided by the GM Founda-

tion allow us to give back in a big way each year.

"Through the Plant City Grants initiative, we're helping to build stronger communities and are striving to enrich the lives of our neighbors."

The GM Foundation grants are given to a wide variety of organizations across the country that families rely on to provide much needed services, improve education and impact the quality of life within their respective communities, Nadrowski said.

The grants, he added, will make these communities even greater places to work and live.

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Visteon to Demo Cloud Technologies at CES

Visteon Corporation will premiere a range of innovative connected vehicle technologies and services at the 2015 International CES in Las Vegas Jan. 6-9.

Through a range of highly interactive displays and in-vehicle demonstrations, Visteon will demonstrate Cloud-based, connected technologies, which, through live 4GLTE over-the-air connections, provide new features and services enhancing the driving experience and the residual value of the vehicle over its lifetime, said Visteon President and CEO Tim Leuliette.

Visteon also will show its developments for autonomous driving through immersive simulators.

"As we transition into the era of the connected car, CES has become a significant automotive technology showcase and our biggest customer event of the year," said Leuliette. "We will showcase current, near-term, and advanced technologies that

will extend the relevance of the car's electronics for both automakers and consumers."

Now in its 16th year at CES, Visteon has one of the longest-running participation levels among automotive companies at the annual show, Leuliette said.

"Technology will define how mobility, the Internet of Things and the auto industry work together to build the cars and transportation systems of the future," said Martin T. Thall, Visteon's executive vice president and president of Electronics.

"At the 2015 CES, Visteon will showcase how we fuse technology, innovation and ecosystem partnerships to unlock the value of connectivity and transform driving into a connected experience."

Visteon will highlight its Semper Novus (Latin for "always new") cockpit concept system, which will demonstrate ways for consumers to update their vehicle's technical systems through

hardware updates and software downloads.

The concept gives automakers the opportunity to keep the vehicle perpetually current and introduce new services so consumers can enjoy an "always new" experience.

A record 11 automotive manufacturers will exhibit at the 2015 CES.

Automotive exhibits will cover more than 165,000 net square feet of exhibit space, up 17 percent from the 2014 show.

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Federal Government Puts More Pressure on Takata

DETROIT (AP) – Ford Motor Co. has agreed to government demands to expand a driver's side air bag inflator recall to the entire U.S.

The move announced Dec. 18 adds 447,000 Ford vehicles to the list of those recalled due to driver's inflators made by Japan's Takata Corp. The inflators can explode with too much force, spewing shrapnel into drivers and passengers.

Ford's action puts pressure on BMW and Chrysler, the only two automakers that haven't agreed to national recalls. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration made the demand of five automakers, saying the inflators are dangerous. Honda and Mazda have taken their recalls national.

Previously, the recalls were limited to high-humidity states mainly along the Gulf Coast.

The Ford national recall covers certain 2005-08 Mustangs and 2005-06 GT sports cars. The company also announced it would recall the same cars in Canada, Mexico and a few other countries. Dec. 18's announcement brings to just over 502,000 the number of Ford vehicles recalled for Takata air bags.

The automaker said in a statement that it's aware of one accident with an injury that could be linked to the air bags. Dealers will replace the inflators at no cost to customers.

Last month, NHTSA demanded that Takata and the five automakers recall driver's inflators across the nation. Takata and Chrysler have refused and could face legal action. BMW says it's still evaluating the demand.

Takata took out full-page advertisements in newspapers, including the *Detroit Free Press* on

Dec. 18, saying that it will work with NHTSA and automakers to expand the recalls by increasing production capacity for replacement air bags. The company said it's exploring whether other companies' air bags can be used in replacement kits.

But in documents filed with NHTSA, Takata refused to do a national recall, saying it's not supported by testing data. The company also said NHTSA didn't have the authority to order a parts supplier to do a recall. The safety agency has threatened legal action if Takata and the remaining automakers don't comply with its demand.

NHTSA has said the inflator propellant, ammonium nitrate, can burn faster than designed if exposed to prolonged airborne moisture. That can cause it to blow apart a metal canister meant to contain the explosion.

The safety agency says there's no data to support a nationwide passenger air bag recall, which so far has been held to the high-humidity states. In total, 10 automakers have models with Takata air bags, which have been blamed for at least five deaths and multiple injuries worldwide. So far, automakers have recalled about 12 million vehicles in the U.S. and about 19 million globally for similar problems.

U.S. recalls previously had been limited to Florida, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. But recently, under pressure from NHTSA, automakers have expanded them to include Saipan, Guam, American Samoa as well as Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas – all areas with average annual dew points of 60 degrees or higher.

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Labor Groups at Odds Over Being VW Employees' Voice

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (AP) — A labor group seeking to rival the United Auto Workers at the Volkswagen plant in Tennessee says it won't submit its list of members to the management until next month.

Supporters of the American Council of Employees told the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* for Dec. 14's editions that they want a voice under the new labor policy Volkswagen announced in November that requires a minimum of 15 percent of workers to qualify for regular meetings with management and access to plant meeting space.

The UAW, which lost a narrow union vote at the plant in February, submitted a list of its members almost immediately after the new policy was announced. An independent auditor last week verified that the union had signed up at least 45 percent of the workers at the plant.

That qualified the UAW for the top tier of the company's new labor policy, the first time the union has achieved a formal role within a plant owned by a foreign automaker in the South.

While the policy does not address collective bargaining or exclusive representation of workers, the UAW has vowed to press ahead to achieve those thresholds.

The American Council of Employees was formed by workers who opposed the UAW in the February vote.

Leaders were unsuccessful in their call for Volkswagen to accept only membership cards signed after the new labor policy was announced in November. Those same leaders now argue that the auditor counted several UAW cards that were "inaccu-

rate, unreliable and out of date." Volkswagen worker Mike Cantrell, the president of UAW Local 42, has called those claims as "bogus and without merit."

"UAW Local 42 is moving forward in collaborative talks with Volkswagen and will not be distracted by this nonsense," he said.

Meanwhile at the Nissan Motor Co. in Smyrna, *The Daily News Journal* reported that union officials allege that more than half of the plant's 8,000-plus workers are temporary employees.

"The majority of their workforce is employed by a third-party agency with no commitment whatsoever to the workers," said Mike Herron, chairman of the UAW Local 1853 that represents employees at the General Motors factory in Spring Hill.

UAW has twice attempted to unionize the 31-year-old Nissan factory when it had a larger makeup of direct employees, but was unable to persuade the majority of the workers to agree to the collective-bargaining representation.

Nissan spokesman Justin Saia declined to confirm or deny the UAW assertion that more than 60 percent of the workforce at the Smyrna car factory is temporary employees with a company contractor.

"We do not provide that level of detail concerning the operations of our plants for proprietary reasons," Saia said.

"However, the use of contract workers (associates) is a common practice throughout the industry.

"We strive to maintain a level of associate workers that is complementary to these industry standards."

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Where's Santa? OnStar Will Let You Know

This Christmas, finding out where Santa Claus is during his famous holiday run will be a push of a button away.

For the sixth consecutive year, OnStar is providing U.S., Canada and Mexico subscribers the opportunity to learn Santa's whereabouts on his journey across the globe Christmas Eve.

With a press of the blue OnStar button, subscribers can be informed of Santa's location at that moment in time, said GM spokesperson and jolly old elf expert Stefan Cross.

Through collaboration with the North American Aerospace Defense Command's (NORAD) Track Santa program, anyone with an active OnStar subscription can request a "Santa Update" between 7 a.m. on Dec. 24 and 5 a.m. EST on Dec. 25.

OnStar advisors will provide Santa's location based on NO-

RAD's official Santa Tracker Map.

"My 2-year-old son has finally reached the age where he is excited about Santa," said Keitha Martin, a GMC Acadia owner and OnStar subscriber.

"This year, we will be following Santa's journey to deliver his gifts through OnStar. My husband and I are just as excited for this magical experience."

And for each Santa call received, OnStar will donate a dollar to United Way for Southeastern Michigan.

"We are grateful to OnStar for making United Way for Southeastern Michigan the recipient of dollars raised through the program to chart Santa's progress," said United Way for Southeast Michigan president and CEO Michael J. Brennan.

"We are pleased to be part of a program that brings such delight

to so many during this holiday season."

OnStar is dedicated to the safety and security of subscribers year-round.

To accommodate the volume of calls seeking Santa's location, advisor staffing is adjusted, Cross said.

"We are happy to provide our subscribers with a special way to get into the holiday spirit," said Terry Inch, OnStar chief operating officer.

"OnStar's advisors enjoy responding to these calls and helping make the season a little more joyous."

Individuals without an OnStar subscription can follow Santa's journey via the NORAD Tracks Santa website, Facebook page, Twitter hashtag #NORADSanta or by calling the hotline at 1-877-HI-NORAD (1-877-446-6723).

Forrester Named Purchasing Head At FordDirect

FordDirect, a joint venture between Ford Motor Company and its franchised dealers, appointed Jeff Forrester as director of Purchasing, a position within the newly created department at FordDirect.

In his role, Forrester will be primarily responsible for vendor management and contracts, working with internal teams to achieve cost reductions, quality maintenance, policy compliance and risk mitigation while driving business objectives. As head of the department, Forrester will report to Beth Hill, general counsel and chief compliance officer.

"As a practical, experienced executive who has successfully managed large, complex transactions, Jeff is well-positioned to lead and shape the new purchasing department," said Stacey Coopes, FordDirect CEO.

"As FordDirect continues its growth, his expertise in purchasing and procurement will be instrumental to the company's success and long-term sustainability."

Forrester has deep automotive experience, Coopes said, having worked for both automotive suppliers and OEMs, including Ford Motor Company. Prior to joining FordDirect, he was a senior buyer at General Motors where he was responsible for the procurement of commodities, including technology and telecommunications.

In addition to his automotive experience, Forrester, said Coopes, has extensive strategic and tactical experience in vendor risk management, contract negotiations, business process outsourcing, insourcing, RFPs/RFQs, SOW development, contract management and process reform.

Former GM Plant Site of Glass Firm

DAYTON, Ohio (AP) – A Chinese company is beginning to hire at an automotive glass-making plant in southwest Ohio expected to revitalize a former General Motors factory site.

Fuyao (FWEE'-ow) Glass Industry Group Co. paid \$15 million for the former auto plant in Moraine and plans a \$230 million investment.

The Dayton Daily News reports the company announced plans to fill 430 salaried and production jobs by spring. The company hopes to have 630 employees in place by the end of next year and eventually employee 800 to 1,000 people.

The plant will primarily produce windshields, sunroofs and side windows.

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Union Balks as Contract Talks Loom in Summer

by TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) – United Auto Workers President Dennis Williams says he’s not buying the Detroit Three automakers’ argument against wage increases for longtime workers.

Williams told reporters at a meeting last week that keeping Detroit competitive with foreign automakers can’t always be done on the backs of workers. But he concedes that the companies’ costs must remain competitive.

Both sides will have to balance the competing interests when contract talks open with Fiat Chrysler, Ford and General Motors this summer.

Williams, who replaced Bob King as president in June, conceded that rank-and-file factory workers want to share more of the auto companies’ profits with an annual wage increase.

He said companies talk only about workers when they speak of being competitive.

“That’s not the only way to do it,” Williams said. “There’s processes in which they can do better. There’s quality issues, warranty issues.”

Longtime UAW workers have not had an hourly pay raise since 2007, although they have received hefty annual profit-sharing checks that equal about \$4 per hour. But there’s no guarantee of getting checks every year.

Entry-level workers who are paid about half of what veterans make got a pay raise in the 2011 contract talks.

Williams also said he is committed to “start bridging” the gap between entry level wages, which run from about \$16 per hour to just over \$19, and wages for longtime workers of about \$29 per hour.

But the automakers say the entry-level wages are what keeps them competitive and they don’t want them to end.

Detroit automakers also say their costs are on the rise, and there’s a growing gap between them and foreign automakers’ labor costs.

They want to address the gap and other issues in the upcoming talks.

Williams also said he’s already talking to the companies about removing recall costs from the profit-sharing formula. A record spate of recalls this year, especially at General Motors, will cut into the workers’ checks next year.

Lear to Create 96 Jobs in Indiana

PORTAGE, Ind. (AP) – A Southfield company that makes automotive seating and electrical distribution systems has announced plans to spend \$7.3 million to lease and equip a new 93,000-square-foot facility in northwestern Indiana.

Lear Corp. says it plans to create up to 96 jobs at the facility in Portage, 30 miles east of Chicago. Lear says the facility will allow the company to increase storage space, optimize production requirements and meet increased industry demand for Ford Explorer seat systems.

Lear has about 1,200 full-time employees in Indiana. It plans to begin hiring production assemblers in April.

The Indiana Economic Development Corporation offered Lear Corporation up to \$675,000 in conditional tax credits based on its job-creation plans. The city of Portage approved additional incentives.

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