

GM May Add 2,500 Employees, Invest \$1B at Tech Center

by Jim Stickford

Warren could get a big boost if plans to expand the GM Tech Center go through.

News of this proposal became public after a *Detroit News* article was printed on April 9.

That was the same day as Mayor James Fouts State of the City address was given. Fouts announced in a press release on May 8, that a major corporate citizen of Warren was seeking tax abatements for a \$1 billion investment which would be the largest non-manufacturing expansion in Michigan.

Fouts said this expansion would bring an additional 2,500 to 3,000 jobs to Warren and the proposed project would involve 1.4 million square feet. That was all that Fouts would say at his State of the City address.

"I wanted to announce the project at my speech, but the corporation involved didn't want the announcement made until everything was approved and final," Fouts said.

GM spokesman Daniel Flores said that *The Detroit News* article got the "essentials" of GM's request to Warren correct, and that GM had indeed filed for a tax abatement with the city.

"We're not disclosing any specifics about the project at this

time," Flores said. "I will say that GM is looking at the viability of all of its facilities and its operations right now. And it's no secret that the Tech Center in Warren needs some improvements."

The Tech Center first opened up in the mid-1950s and has some old buildings, Flores said.

Additionally, the site was part of the great flood that hit Warren last August. Water got into some of the tunnels at the Tech Center and some of the buildings were flooded as well. Certain parts of the Tech Center were closed for weeks so that repairs and a cleanup could be done.

"I want to say right now that this is not a done deal," Flores said. "GM won't be releasing any details of any expansion project until everything is approved and in place."

Fouts, speaking to the press after his State of the City speech, said that he expects that it won't be until May that final approvals are given to any tax abatement requests made for the proposed major business expansion.

"That's all I have to say," Fouts said. "I don't want to do anything that will kill the proposal. This isn't a done deal yet."

Ground for the Tech Center was broken in 1949. Construction was completed in 1955.

According to GM's own



Aerial view of the GM Tech Center

archives, when the Tech Center was dedicated in 1956 by President Dwight Eisenhower spoke via radio. Architect Eero Saarinen's goal was to provide a symbol of tomorrow's industrial environment, where the surroundings would be beautiful as well as functional. Saarinen wanted to

avoid an institutional look and symbolize openness with low, long and horizontal buildings.

According to GM records, Saarinen used automotive materials and assembly line construction methods. The interior walls were actually built at plants and assembled on site. To make the

buildings as flexible as possible, Saarinen used a five-foot module or standardized measurement. This applied not only to the steel construction, but to the lighting, heating, ventilating and fire protection facilities, as well as to lab-

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GM Uses Virtual Testing to Build Safer Cars

It is now possible to create a computer simulation that has "virtual" crashes which, in turn, have a concrete impact on vehicle design.

At General Motors, the company has developed computing capabilities that enable its engineers to have virtual crash tests to make vehicles – including the 2015 Chevrolet Trax – more road ready.

Eight decades after GM engineers developed the first barrier crash test, physical crash testing continues to provide engineers with great insight as to how vehicles perform. But it takes a lot of time, said GM spokeswoman Leslie Rajewski.

Creating the tooling to build a physical prototype can take weeks or months. Setting up the cameras, test rigs, crash test dummies, sensors, and other hardware for a physical test also adds considerable time, Rajewski said. Once a prototype vehicle is used in a crash test, there are limited possibilities for the vehicle to be used in another test. If engineers need to test for different variables or evaluate a revised part, a new batch of prototype vehicles would need to be built in order to continue testing.

Enter virtual crash testing. Advanced digital models and simulations allow engineers to address challenges early in the vehicle design process, and to do it over and over, said Al Manzor, GM North America regional chief engineer for Small and Compact Vehicles.

"The safety Trax offers is the direct result of exhaustive testing and analysis using both traditional physical tests and advanced computer simulation," said Manzor. "The vehicles in the computer models are complete 3-D repli-

cas of the physical vehicles, so the simulations accurately depict the way all parts of the structure and components would react in a crash.

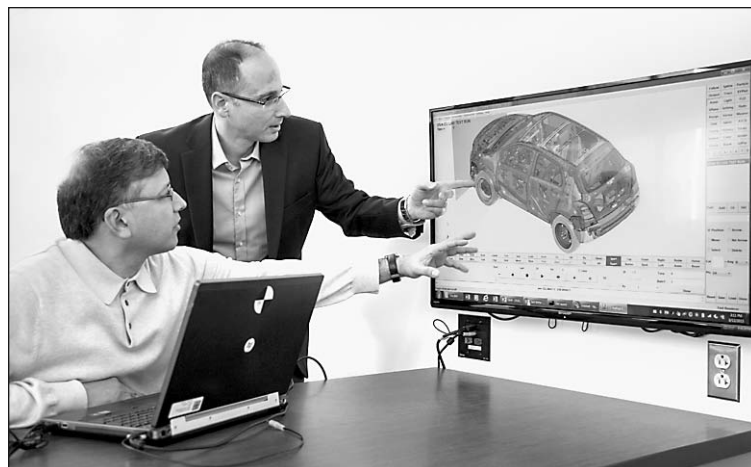
"The understanding we gain by using these tests allows us to make more informed decisions regarding."

Rendered directly from digital design files, these virtual vehicle models measure many terabytes in size and can be "excruciatingly" detailed down to the last nut and bolt found on a physical vehicle, Manzor said. These parts are further broken down into finite elements, which allow engineers to precisely model and evaluate how a physical part will behave once manufactured.

Vehicle crash models may con-

sist of 6 million to 7 million elements, and take advanced supercomputers several hours to put through a simulated test. The result? Engineers can see how a vehicle will perform in a collision, often from angles difficult to replicate with a physical test, said Sajid Syed, safety team lead for the Trax program.

"In a physical crash test, high-speed cameras allow us to see how a vehicle performs in a collision from certain angles – say, from within the passenger compartment," said Syed. "But the virtual testing allows us to see much more detail. Not only can we look through the vehicle as if its outer skin was transparent, but we can also view how a single part behaves."



Sajid Syed, seated, and Kenneth Bonello review Trax safety data.

"A crash event may take only 100 milliseconds, but we're able to step through millisecond by millisecond, and see the sequence of events that might be

unfolding beneath the surface," said Ken Bonello, senior manager of safety computer-aided engi-

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Uniroyal tire on I-94 in Allen Park

The 'Big' Tire Turns 50

ALLEN PARK, Mich. (AP) – It was a home, Ferris wheel, marriage proposal site, target for arrows, and ogled by Paul McCartney.

But mainly, it's the biggest dang tire you've ever seen.

It's the giant Uniroyal tire on Interstate 94 in Allen Park, and it's turning 50 this month.

No formal celebration is planned, but the city is proud of the 80-foot behemoth, which is one of the largest and most famous roadside landmarks in Michigan.

"A lot of people have a soft spot for it," longtime Allen Park resident Sharon Broglin told *The Detroit News*.

The tire is such an icon that an 11-foot nail plucked from it became famous in its own right, getting its own handler, vehicle and email address.

The hulking sphere means dif-

ferent things to different folks.

For visitors, it's an auto-themed welcome to the Motor City. For residents, it means they're halfway between Detroit and Metro Airport.

The tire isn't a tourist attraction. It's basically an eight-story billboard telling people to buy Uniroyals.

Still, it's a billboard that's listed on Google Maps.

It weighs 12 tons, but not a single ounce is rubber. It's steel and polyester resin with a fiberglass surface.

It's immune to potholes unless said potholes are the size of the Detroit River.

Allen Park Mayor Bill Matakas first noticed it when returning home from the University of Michigan Law School one weekend in 1966.

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Ken Hopkins

Neapco Holdings Names New CEO

Neapco Holdings of Belleville, a world-wide automotive supplier, has appointed Ken Hopkins as its new president and CEO.

"Ken brings more than 25 years of executive leadership and management in automotive engineering, manufacturing, sales and marketing to the position," said Della DiPietro, Neapco spokesperson.

Previously he served as chief operating officer of JTEKT North America, one of the 50 largest automotive suppliers in North America.

Hopkins is Neapco's second leader since the company began its international expansion in 2008.

"The company is almost 100 years old," DiPietro said. "It came under new ownership in 2003 and started an expansion, which took it from a U.S. firm to one that has facilities in Mexico, Europe and China as well as the United States."

Neapco was named by *Inc. Magazine* in September 2012 as the 16th fastest growing, private U.S. manufacturer, DiPietro said, and was recognized for a growth rate of more than 400 percent during the economically challenging period of 2008 through 2011.

Hopkins joins Neapco as the company enters the next phase of global expansion in its manufacturing capacity, DiPietro said, and its customer base.

Neapco's prop shafts and half shafts are in use on a number of new vehicles including the North American International Auto Show's Truck of the Year – the Ford F-150; *Motor Trend's* Truck of the Year – the Chevrolet Colorado; and the UK Car of the Year – the BMW i8 plug-in hybrid sports car.

"The company's products also are found in dozens of cars and trucks, as well as in many non-automotive and industrial applications, where precision and quality are valued," DiPietro said.

"It is no surprise that our prop and half shafts are found in many of the world's most popular and desirable vehicles," said Hopkins. "Our technology combined with state of the art manufacturing and lean processes, and a team well-regarded for nimbleness and responsiveness, position us effectively for even greater success. I look forward to working with this talented team."

Federal-Mogul Opens 'Garage Gurus' Learning Centers

Danny "The Count" Koker, a self-taught technician and star of the hit reality TV series "Counting Cars," will join hundreds of vehicle repair professionals and other VIPs during the grand openings of Federal-Mogul Motorparts first three "Garage Gurus" regional training centers, in the Chicago, Los Angeles and New York City markets.

Garage Gurus is a first-of-its-kind, nationwide technical education network offering onsite, online and on-demand training to professional technicians, shop owners, service writers and other front-line industry professionals, said Federal-Mogul Motorparts spokeswoman Susan Fisher.

The network will expand to 15 training center locations around the country by the end of the year. Federal-Mogul Motorparts is a division of Federal-Mogul Holdings Corporation.

Koker, whose Las Vegas-based vehicle restoration and customization business is featured in the weekly series on the History Channel, will attend the Garage Gurus grand openings in Skokie, Ill., on Tuesday, April 14; Van Nuys, Calif., on Thursday, April 16; and the Bronx, N.Y., on Tuesday, April 21.

Open to any vehicle service professional, Fisher said these celebrations will take place from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. and feature food trucks, live entertainment, facility tours and opportunities to meet several of Federal-Mogul Motorparts more than 100 ASE-certified "Gurus."

"As a self-taught mechanic, I can appreciate how challenging it must be for professional technicians to develop the specialized skills needed to diagnose and repair each new automotive technology," Koker said. "Garage Gurus delivers that training and related support when, where and how technicians need it. This is a huge benefit to the thousands of professionals we all count on to keep our cars in safe and reliable condition."

Each Garage Gurus training center, Fisher said, includes multiple vehicle repair/training bays and classrooms and serves as the operating base for one or more "Gurus-On-The-Go" product technology vans. The Garage Gurus curriculum comprises



(l-r) Techs Mike Zdralek, Anthony Frohwein and Humberto Hernandez.

more than 100 diagnostic and repair courses, including onsite workshops, field clinics and distance learning modules and webinars offered at FMgaragegurus.com.

All training, product demonstrations and related assistance are available in both the English and Spanish languages, Fisher said.

"Garage Gurus is our investment in the future of the thousands of local shops and talented, hardworking professionals who maintain and repair today's passenger vehicles," said Dan Ninivaggi, CEO, Federal-Mogul Motorparts.

"They have difficult but extremely important and rewarding jobs, and we are committed to

providing the information and support they need to continue to be successful."

Garage Gurus is a central element of Federal-Mogul Motorparts' "Tech First" initiative, which is aimed at strengthening the automotive service industry's connection to the front-line professionals who service thousands of vehicles each day, Ninivaggi said.

"We believe that trained and informed techs are the heart of the rapidly changing repair market. Onsite, online and on-demand, Garage Gurus is committed to arming techs with the latest tools and information so they can keep pace with emerging technologies," Ninivaggi said.

In addition to offering technical training and other assistance, the new network is designed to underscore the importance of using premium branded replacement parts engineered and manufactured to provide the quality, safety and performance consumers demand.

To learn more, please visit www.fmgaragegurus.com, Fisher said.

Wash Road Salt From Underneath Vehicles

DETROIT (AP) – If you live where salt is used to clear the roads of snow and ice, U.S. safety regulators have a message for you: Wash the underside of your car.

The message came April 8, from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which closed a five-year investigation into rusting pipes that carry brake fluid in about 5 million older Chevrolet, Cadillac and GMC pickups and SUVs, without seeking a recall.

Instead, the agency blamed the problem on rust caused by road salt and a lack of washing. It determined that it was not the result of a manufacturing or design defect.

The agency urged people in 20 cold-weather states and Washington, D.C., to get their car and truck undercarriages washed several times during and after the winter, and to get their brake lines inspected for rust and replace them if necessary. The warning underscores the importance of washing highly corro-

sive salt from beneath a car because over time, it can cause suspension parts, the frame, or other components to corrode and fail.

Most automatic car washes have jets that spray the undercarriage with water to hose off the salt. Some, like the Jax Kar Wash chain, based in Southfield, also can spray undercarriage rust inhibitor during winter months, said Shawn Connelly, a

general manager.

NHTSA's finding that the GM trucks weren't defective came even though it received 3,645 complaints of brake pipe rust in the General Motors vehicles from the 1999 to 2007 model years, including 107 crash reports and 40 reports of injuries. Seventy-five percent of the complaints came from trucks in the first four model years covered by the investigation, 1999-2003, the agency said.

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Volt Production Halts for a Few Weeks this June

DETROIT (AP) – General Motors will stop making the Chevrolet Volt for four weeks in June and July due to slow sales and to deal with the change to an all-new version of the gas-electric hybrid car.

The company says the Detroit-Hamtramck plant that makes the Volt and four other cars will probably stay open through the summer despite plans for the Volt. The factory also is undergoing construction so it can build a new full-size Cadillac CT6 and the 2016 Volt starting late in the summer.

Sales of electric and hybrid cars have slowed this year, largely due to low gasoline prices. The national average for a gallon of regular gas was about \$2.40 on Thursday, 35 percent lower than last year's peak of \$3.70.

The cheap gas has really hurt Volt sales and caused inventory to build on dealer lots. Through March, GM sold only 1,874 Volts, down 48 percent from a year ago. The company now has enough Volts to supply dealers for 210 days, according to Ward's Automotive. A 60-day supply is optimal. Volt production will cease before the traditional two-week auto plant shutdown over the July 4 holiday.

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oratory furniture, storage units, wall partitions and door units – all of which are keyed to it.

The five foot module was chosen instead of the more popular (at the time) four-foot module because General Motors wanted larger (10 and 15-foot wide) offices for its employees. After the Tech Center was completed, the five-foot module was used as a model for industry.

Buildings at the Tech Center represented the first significant installation of laminated panels and the first use of a uniquely thin sandwich panel that is a complete wall in itself.

Instead of walls constructed out of 14-inch thick masonry – that was a building practice for hundreds of years – the same heat insulating qualities were achieved with panels only two inches thick. This vastly increased usable space. The panel is a sandwich with a permanent-finish porcelain enamel steel skin completely bonded to a heavy Kraft paper honeycomb core - filled with granular insulation.

Ceramic glazed brick construction was undertaken especially at Saarinen's request after some experimentation.

GM ended up financing a large kiln to produce the bricks needed for the project.

Saarinens said he wanted the Tech Center to resemble autumn leaves reflecting the late after-



Aerial view of the Tech Center

noon sun, so he selected brick colors of crimson, orange, yellow, blue, and neutrals of olive, slate and black.

Saarinens took certain things from the auto industry. For instance, windows in the buildings were quite revolutionary for the time. Saarinen's design was based on the mechanical sealing gaskets used on car windshields.

Greg Wallace, manager of the GM Heritage Center, said that when the Tech Center opened up in the mid-1950s, Warren was still basically just an undeveloped "farm town."

"The Tech Center was certainly the biggest thing to happen to Warren," Wallace said.

"I remember as a kid growing up riding my bike by the Tech

Center and thinking how futuristic it looked. I thought that if there was ever an unsolvable problem like a giant asteroid was going to hit the earth, the Tech Center would be the place where GM scientists came up with a solution. It had a reputation for engineering excellence when it opened and it still does today."

GM Uses Virtual Testing to Build Safer Vehicles

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neering (CAE) integration. "We can look at the forces applied to the vehicle's structure, determine what part might be affected next, and design the vehicle so it channels energy in a way that best protects the occupants."

Because Trax engineers are located in South Korea and the U.S., digital tests can be performed around the globe at any time, and the international engineering team responsible for Trax's safety performance can collectively test and refine vehicle designs to elevate occupant safety in a crash, Bonello said.

Virtual vehicle models are growing increasingly detailed and more realistic.

Not only are the crash simulations constantly being evaluated and checked against real-world test results, but the vehicle models themselves are constantly evolving.

"Safety is a big part of our simulation efforts, but it's also a tool used by engineers evaluating noise/vibration, durability, aerodynamics, fuel economy, and other important qualities," said Bonello.

"All these groups are using the same models; the same set of math data. It's a very integrated and coordinated effort."

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GM Honored for its Energy Savings by EPA

General Motors earned the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2015 ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year award for Sustained Excellence for leadership in protecting the environment through superior energy efficiency. GM also received the ENERGY STAR Climate Communications award.

The ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year - Sustained Excellence award, said GM spokeswoman Sharon Basel, is the highest recognition a corporation can receive from the EPA.

This year marks GM's fourth such award for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by setting and achieving aggressive goals and employing innovative energy-efficiency approaches, Basel said.

"Achieving operational excellence in all we do extends to reducing the environmental impact of how we build our vehicles," said Greg Martin, GM executive director for sustainability. "We are leveraging our scale to conserve energy and resources throughout the manufacturing process."

GM joined ENERGY STAR as a partner in 1995, Basel said. Since then, the company has reduced energy intensity of its U.S. operations, or the amount of energy used per vehicle produced, by 40 percent. It has reduced carbon dioxide emission intensity 41 percent.

Combined, these savings are equivalent to the electricity used by 875,000 homes in one year and has allowed GM to avoid paying \$435 million in energy costs.

The EPA cited these GM achievements in 2014:

- Reduced energy intensity by 6 percent globally.
- Expanded Energy OnStar to GM powertrain facilities. Energy

OnStar is the company's system tracking 2.5 million energy data points per minute and providing real-time monitoring of energy per unit produced and facility heating and cooling systems.

- Invested \$34 million in more than 30 facilities for energy efficiency, water and carbon reduction projects, each with a return on investment of less than two years.

- Collaborated with utility companies on energy projects and funding.

- Eliminated the use of coal at Wentzville, Mo., and Detroit-Hamtramck, Mich., assembly plants.

- Remained the global leader of the ENERGY STAR Challenge for Industry with 70 GM facility achievers, resulting in \$196 million in energy costs avoided and 1.8 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions reduced, equivalent to adding 378,947 passenger vehicles without a greenhouse gas impact.

"Through its sustained participation with ENERGY STAR, General Motors is helping Americans save money, save energy, and do their part to reduce our nation's greenhouse gas emissions that fuel climate change," said EPA administrator Gina McCarthy.

"General Motors is demonstrating a strong commitment to energy efficiency and to preserving a healthy planet for future generations."

General Motors earned ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year - Climate Communications for its commitment to educating employees, customers and other stakeholders about the importance of energy efficiency and the impacts of climate change, McCarthy said.

Specifically, the EPA recognized these communications initiatives:

- Published energy and climate-related posts on its environmental blog, making up more than half of the editorial content in 2014.

- Engaged college students as well as professors, non-governmental organizations and environmental leaders in a social media conversation via #CleanEnergyU as part of the voluntary Chevrolet Clean Energy Campus Campaign.

- Participated in energy efficiency discussions throughout the year, including a plenary session at the recent Clinton Global Initiative event during Climate Week.



GM's Kokomo pumps capture heat to warm water for manufacturing.

Automated Delphi Vehicles Completes Cross Country Tour

Delphi Automotive PLC has completed the longest automated drive in North America, traveling from San Francisco to New York in the first coast-to-coast trip ever taken by an automated vehicle.

Nearly 3,400 miles were covered with 99 percent of the drive in fully automated mode, said Delphi spokesman Berj Alexanian.

The drive was used by Delphi engineers to research and collect

information that will help further advance active safety technology – the most rapidly growing technology sector of the auto industry.

The team collected nearly three terabytes of data – about 30 percent of all of the printed material in the Library of Congress, Alexanian said.

"Our vehicle performed remarkably well during this drive, exceeding our expectations," said Jeff Owens, Delphi chief

technology officer. "The knowledge obtained from this trip will help optimize our existing active safety products and accelerate our future product development, which will allow us to deliver unsurpassed automotive grade technologies to our customers."

The nine-day trip crossed 15 states and the District of Columbia, Alexanian said.

Along the way, the vehicle encountered complex driving situations such as traffic circles, con-

struction zones, bridges, tunnels, aggressive drivers and a variety of weather conditions, Alexanian said.

Delphi's automated driving vehicle is equipped with a full suite of advanced technologies and features, many of which are already on the market today, Alexanian said, including items such as collision mitigation, integrated radar and camera systems, forward collision and lane departure warning.

Michigan Schools See the Value of Robotics Teams

by MIKE HOUSEHOLDER
Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) – An increasing number of students from Michigan's most financially strapped urban school districts, including Detroit and Flint, are joining robotics teams because local universities are making space and materials available at no charge.

The University of Michigan started the trend with its Michigan Engineering Zone. The 5,200-square-foot facility in Detroit, filled with two computer labs, a machine shop, robot testing area and collaborative workstations, hosts 18 teams from city schools. Many of them wouldn't otherwise be able to participate in the FIRST robotics contest.

Michigan has more high school teams competing in the annual competition than any other state. But participants and advisers say that beyond the contest, the teams further students' interest in learning about related topics and keep them engaged in school.

"Michigan Engineering Zone is the greatest thing I've ever been to," said Papia Aziz, captain of a team known as the Pink Panthers from the Detroit International Academy for Young Women.

Aziz, a 16-year-old junior who wants to be a pediatrician, credits the MEZ, as it is commonly known, with furthering her interest in STEM, or science, technology, engineering and math. She said she enjoys "figuring out ways to solve a problem" and the fun of competing.

Competitions are nice, but success at them is not the ultimate goal, says Gail Alpert, the president of FIRST in Michigan.

"They think they're doing ro-

botics. They have no idea that the robot is just the vehicle to excite them about STEM," Alpert said, adding that nearly every student who competes in FIRST robotics graduates from high school.

Of the 42 seniors who spent time at the MEZ during last school year, 38 went on to higher education, while four joined the military. Either way, they all graduated. That compares with 2014 graduation rates of 78 percent for the state and 71 percent for Detroit Public Schools.

"It's almost a miracle if you think about," said Jeanne Murabito, a University of Michigan College of Engineering official who helped create the MEZ six years ago.

It's not just the tools and space that make the MEZ what it is. It's also the people, Murabito said.

Each team has access to professional engineers as well as faculty, staff and students from the University of Michigan.

The same is true at Flint's Kettering University, home to the recently opened FIRST Robotics Community Center. Unlike the MEZ, though, which is 40 miles from Ann Arbor, Kettering's facility is on the school's campus, meaning that faculty, staff and students who serve as team mentors don't have far to travel.

While Kettering's robotics hub is just getting going, the MEZ has been around long enough that it has reached capacity. In fact, the MEZ was forced to turn away teams this year, said Murabito, who is looking for additional funding opportunities to expand the space.

"It's like an infection," said Julian Pate, a retired Ford executive who runs the MEZ.

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Ford ‘STEAM’ Stimulates Students’ Mind and Creativity

Given the chance to be software designers, 100 middle school students at the Ford (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) STEAM Lab Hackathon invented a range of mobile applications to make learning easier, from catching up on missed assignments, to studying math and music through gaming – all the while earning \$42,500 in awards and scholarships, said Shawn Wilson, manager, Multicultural Community Engagement, Ford Motor Company Fund.

The two-day event, Wilson said, wrapped up March 28 and challenged students from five middle schools in the Detroit metropolitan area to learn the basics of software coding, and then produce, or “hack” an application to help them in school.

“This event was designed to give students a voice in their education while learning software coding skills needed to be technology entrepreneurs. What students taught us is just as valuable – utilize existing technology, develop flexible schedules so they can continue learning on their own time, and improve ways to communicate outside the classroom.”

Ford is joining with the United Auto Workers union to enable all students who participated in the Hackathon to attend free of charge a summer software coding class offered by Henry Ford College, Wilson said. The one-week long course will be held at the school’s Dearborn campus. During the class, students will build their own Android apps from scratch and experience how they are placed on the Google Play market.

Participating schools and the Hackathon results are:

- First Place – Patrick Henry

Middle School, Woodhaven, Mich. App: “Second School.” What it does: Allows students, parents, and teachers access to students’ curriculum away from the classroom, ability to track their school progress in real time, and one-to-one communication between parents and teachers. Winnings: \$15,000 for the school and \$2,500 scholarships to each of the five team members to continue their education after high school.

- Second Place – Clippert Academy, Detroit. App: Bookctionary. What it does: A mobile reading assistance application focused on interactive reading comprehension through quizzes, audio assistance, and eBook downloads. Winnings: \$7,500 for the school.

- Third Place – Simpson Middle School, Flat Rock, Mich. App: Stems Root Builder. What it does: A learning application focused on keeping students up to date with their course work when they are out of school. Winnings: \$5,000 for the school.

- Fourth Place – Fisher Upper, Detroit. App: Exstatic. What it does: An app that combines learning music and math together through a gaming and creative platform. Winnings: \$2,500 for the school.

The event occurred at the Ford Resource and Engagement Center in Detroit, where it was part of a live broadcast by MSNBC as part of its Growing Hope series. After learning coding skills on the first day, student ideas were judged by a panel that included Van Jones, #YesWeCode founder, and environmental and civil rights advocate; Stephen Henderson, Pulitzer Prize-winning Editorial Page Editor of the Detroit Free Press and co-host of Detroit Today on WDET; and Joy Reid, national correspondent, MSNBC.



Patrick Henry Middle School winners with Shawn Wilson.

Students also heard from Big Sean, a Detroit native who has become a multiplatinum winning musician and founder of the Sean Anderson Foundation. Big Sean took a break from his tour in Japan to speak via Skype about the importance of technology and the role of the Internet in future jobs. “I can honestly say the Internet really helped me become the artist that I am today,” Big Sean said.

Ford STEAM Lab, an educational program from the Ford Motor Company Fund, works to spark student passion for technology entrepreneurship and careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), said Wilson. To produce the hackathon Ford worked with:

- #YesWeCode, an Oakland, Calif.-based organization that targets low-opportunity youth and

provides them with the necessary resources and tools to become world-class computer programmers.

- Level Playing Field Institute, an educational organization based in Oakland, Calif., committed to eliminating the barriers faced by underrepresented people of color in science, technology, engineering and math.

- Sisters Code, a Detroit organization dedicated to helping women succeed in STEM-related fields.

- Grand Circus, a company based in Detroit that provides training and other skills necessary to work in technology companies.

- National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, a national organization that works on strategies to increase the graduation rate in America’s schools.

Ram 3500 Shows It Can Climb Any Mountain Range

The Fast Lane Truck (TFLtruck), an online reviewing organization, has named the 2015 Ram 3500 with 6.7-liter Cummins engine the winner of its inaugural Gold Hitch Award in the heavy duty diesel segment, said Ram spokesman Nick Cappa.

Within heavy duty classes, the Ram 3500 took top honors for outstanding pulling power, braking, fuel economy, comfort and handling under extreme towing conditions, Cappa said. Award winners were announced following the 2015 Denver Auto Show press day on April 8.

“Ram Heavy Duty trucks are equipped with a long list of exclusive features that set them ahead of the competition, including a cargo view camera, air bag suspension option and of course the hard-hitting 6.7-liter Cummins turbo diesel engine with best-in-class torque,” said Bob Hegbloom, president and CEO – Ram Truck Brand. “This award from TFLtruck recognizes Ram’s overall commitment to engineering and innovation leadership, which includes a four-pillar list of best-in-class titles; fuel economy at 29 mpg, torque at 865 lb.-ft., payload at 7,390 pounds and towing at 30,000 pounds.”

To score the trucks, TFLtruck editors took to the notorious Eisenhower Pass “Ike Gauntlet” located outside Denver with a 21,600-pound trailer in tow, Cappa said. The climb reaches elevations of 11,000 feet with increasing grade near the peak.

Chrysler Launches its New Campaign to Promote 300

The Chrysler brand debuted a new advertising campaign for the 2015 Chrysler 300. Narrated by Peter Dinklage (“Game of Thrones”), the “Drive Proud” campaign celebrates the Americans who have earned their success, from entrepreneurs and small-business owners to self-employed contractors as well as designers and artists, said Fiat Chrysler spokeswoman Diane Morgan.

The first 60-second launch spot, titled “The Kings & Queens of America,” began airing on television the evening of April 9, Morgan said.

“The Chrysler brand celebrates the entrepreneurial spirit of Americans who refuse to give up, dedicate themselves to a craft and have the guts to turn dreams into reality,” said Olivier Francois, chief marketing officer, FCA – Global.

“Our latest homage to the relentless and proud is ‘The Kings and Queens of America,’ where we recognize nobility not as a birthright but an earned designation. Because meaningful success doesn’t appear magically on a silver platter; it is earned and should be rewarded. The crown jewel in this case being the new Chrysler 300 – a car crafted with them in mind.”

Those featured in the campaign, Morgan said, include such people as Becky Hammon (first full-time female NBA assistant coach); Alexis Ohanian (Internet entrepreneur and Reddit co-founder); Mercedes Yvette (jewelry designer); Lynn Le (founder of sportswear company Society Nine); Caroline Styne (restaurant owner); Nolen Niu (furniture designer/Nolen Niu Inc.); Avi Brosh (hotelier); Kwaku Alston (photo-

tographer); Andrew Sasson (hotelier); Tiffany Schrade (jewelry designer); Smith Henderson (novelist); Phil Ivey (professional poker player/entrepreneur); and Shawn Williams (martial arts studio owner/instructor).

Building on the success of the Chrysler 300 sedan’s lifestyle driven models with the public, the lineup has been revamped for 2015 with four highly-equipped models: 300 Limited, 300S, 300C and 300C Platinum, Morgan said.



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2015 F-150 Slims Down in all Kinds of Ways

by Jim Stickford

When it came to reducing the weight of the 2015 Ford F-150, it was the little things that added up.

Ford engineers responsible for the all-new F-150 were tasked with taking weight out of the truck while improving its capability to accomplish all of the work owners expect of the toughest, smartest, most capable and efficient F-150 ever, said Ford spokesman Mike Levine.

While many already know that the increased use of high-strength steel throughout the frame and the first-in-class military-grade, aluminum-alloy body led to approximately 450 pounds of weight savings, there's more to the story, as engineers took approximately 250 pounds of additional weight from seats, bumpers and lots of other places.

"When you lightweight the frame, you can also lightweight other parts that support the frame," Levine said. "The trick is to find out what parts you want to lightweight and what parts you want to keep the same to maintain performance. For example, we kept the axle the same – 9 3/4 inches – because we didn't want to lose any towing capacity."

Towing, Levine said, along with hauling capacity is very impor-

tant to truck buyers, and Ford didn't want to sacrifice any of that to lose weight from the new F-150.

Every pound shaved from a variety of components returns capability back to the customer, so that the all-new F-150 can achieve its best-in-class payload of 3,300 pounds – when properly equipped with 5.0-liter V8, 4x2 – and best-in-class towing of 12,200 pounds, when properly equipped with 3.5-liter EcoBoost V6, 4x2. F-150 also offers a best-in-class EPA-estimated gasoline fuel economy rating.

And all this weight reduction has paid off, Levine said.

"We have something called the '50-foot test,'" Levine said. "That's basically where a driver on an older F-150 can differentiate the difference in performance between an old F-150 and the new F-150 after driving the newer version 50 feet."

Drivers have been commenting on how more fast the new F-150 accelerates, how it stops easier and how better it maneuvers, Levine said. Drivers have also noticed the new F-150s better fuel efficiency as well.

"All this is reflected in our sales," Levine said. "The average time a new F-150 stays on the lot is 18 days, which is four times shorter than the average heavy-duty truck."

Demand for the all new 2015 F-150 is so great, Levine said, that in a couple of cases in Texas people have noticed transports hauling F-150s and have followed that transport to the dealership and offered to buy one of the trucks even before it was unloaded.

"That's very good news," Levine said. "Texas is our biggest truck market. One in five trucks we sell are sold in that state."



2015 F-150

Ford Designer's Career a Real 'Toy Story'

DETROIT (AP) – If you loved Kenner Products' remote control "Ricochet" toy car as a kid and covet the new Ford Edge as an adult, meet Kevin George.

He designed both.

George, exterior design manager for the 2015 Edge crossover, came to Ford through an unusual route: the toy business. For a dozen years, he designed some of the most beloved toys on kids' wish lists – Ricochet, "Jurassic Park" movie figures, "Batman" vehicles, NASCAR models – for Kenner before he realized his life's dream and crossed over to the auto industry in 2001 to sculpt cars.

Where he once worked closely with Hollywood legend Steven Spielberg on Jurassic Park vehicle designs, he now pens cars for

the legendary Blue Oval.

"The passion that kids had for their toys – I want them to grow up and have that same passion for their cars," said the 48-year-old, who has just completed a media tour for the Edge as it debuted in showrooms in March.

Growing up in Kettering, Ohio, Kevin George's passion for autos started young. His father, a General Motors engineer, brought home a steady diet of development vehicles. He learned the language of car design. His friends wanted to play baseball or soccer.

"I wanted to draw cars," he told *The Detroit News*.

But when it came time to choose a university, the budding designer eschewed the traditional auto design factories of De-

troit's College for Creative Studies or California's Art Center College of Design. He chose the University of Cincinnati. Once more, he learned from his father.

"He encouraged me to get an industrial design degree because he said I can always get a product design job," reflects George. "He warned me that the auto business was very cyclical."

After graduation in 1987, George took his "book" – portfolio – to Cincinnati's Kenner, a little toy company once known for Play-Doh and Easy Bake Ovens that had struck pay dirt by landing the "Star Wars" contract to produce action figures. The Hollywood connection was a gold mine for Kenner as it became the go-to company for movie merchandise.

Jury Awards Victim's Family \$150M in Jeep Fuel Fire

NEW YORK (AP) – A jury in Georgia has awarded \$150 million to the family of a 4-year-old boy killed when a Jeep Grand Cherokee exploded into flames after being rear-ended three years ago. The jury said Chrysler, the maker of Jeeps, must pay nearly the full amount.

Jurors in Decatur County ruled April 2 that Chrysler acted with reckless disregard for human life in selling the family of Remington "Remi" Walden a 1999 Jeep with a gas tank mounted behind the rear axle.

Walden, of Bainbridge, Georgia, was killed when the Jeep driven by his aunt was hit from behind by a pickup truck in March 2012. The fuel tank leaked, engulfing the Jeep in flames and killing the boy.

The verdict comes nearly two years after Chrysler compromised with a federal safety agency and agreed to a scaled-down recall of some older-model Jeeps with the rear-mounted tanks. The tanks have little structure to protect them if struck from behind, making them susceptible to punctures and fires.

Federal documents show that at least 75 people have died in post-crash fires due to the rear-mounted fuel tanks.

The 11-woman, one-man jury ruled after a seven-day trial that Chrysler was 99 percent at fault for the crash and the pickup driver was 1 percent at fault. Jurors also determined that Chrysler failed to warn the family of the hazards of driving the Jeep. They ruled that the Waldens should get \$30 million for Remi's pain and suffering and \$120 million for the full value of his life, according to a verdict form.

Mike Palese, spokesman for Chrysler parent company FCA US, said the company is disappointed with the verdict and would appeal. Chrysler, he said, was prevented from presenting data submitted to federal safety regulators showing that the vehicles did not pose an unreasonable safety risk.

"The vehicles are not defective," Palese said.

Carl Tobias, a professor at the University of Richmond law

school, said it will be difficult for Chrysler to overturn a jury verdict, but an appeals court might reduce the amount. He questioned Chrysler's decision to take the case to trial because of the horrific nature of the crash.

Tobias said the Walden verdict is likely to lead others to sue the company, or to speed along cases that are already in the system.

Chrysler has long contended that the Jeeps were no more dangerous than comparable SUVs built at the time. It used that argument to convince the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in 2013 to allow Chrysler to recall 1.56 million Jeeps after the government agency initially recommended that 2.7 million be repaired. Under the recall, Chrysler agreed to install trailer hitches in the rear as an extra layer of protection.

Safety advocates have called the size of the recall and the fix inadequate.

Atlanta attorney Jim Butler argued during the trial that Remi's death resulted from the fire because of the gas tank's poor position.

The child was on his way to a tennis lesson when the SUV was struck from behind.

"Numerous witnesses saw Remi struggling to escape and heard him screaming for help," the family's lawsuit alleged.

The lawsuit alleged that Chrysler placed the gas tank in a "crush zone" behind the rear axle and knew the location was dangerous, and that the company failed to protect the gas tank against rupturing.

Trial testimony showed that the compromise with safety regulators over the recall was worked out in a Chicago airport meeting between Fiat Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne, former Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and ex-NHTSA Administrator David Strickland.

In a letter to Chrysler in 2013, NHTSA's Office of Defects Investigation told the company the Jeeps should be recalled. "The defects present an unreasonable risk to motor vehicles," the letter said, "because people . . . have burned to death in rear impact crashes."

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Uniroyal Tire Turns 50

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“You cannot not notice it,” he said.

It was created as a tire-like Ferris wheel for the 1964 World’s Fair in New York, providing rides to more than 2 million fairgoers.

Afterward, it was disassembled and transported by 21 railroad flat cars to Allen Park, where it was reconstructed, sans gondolas, near a Uniroyal Tire Co. corporate building in 1966, according to the book “Images of America: Allen Park.”

Uniroyal plants in Detroit once employed 10,000 workers who produced 60,000 tires a day.

The plants and corporate building are gone. The tire endures.

“It lets travelers know that automobiles are our thing,” said Renee Monforton, spokeswoman for the Detroit Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The tire has been featured on Christmas ornaments, cartoon illustrations, and music videos from Wings’ “Silly Love Songs” in 1976 to Kid Rock’s “Roll On” in 2008.

A 2001 postcard by the Allen Park Historical Museum promotes the city as the “Home of the Giant Tire.”

One reason the museum put out the card was to counter a Detroit postcard claiming the landmark was in that city, said Broglin, who has been museum director for 28 years.

Visitors have lots of questions about the tire, she said. Among them: How big is it, why is it there, how did it get there, who owns it and what is under it?

Because Uniroyal was bought by Michelin in 1990, the tire, supported by a concrete base, is owned by a French company, which now makes us even for the Statue of Liberty, Broglin said. Many charities and other groups have sought to use the tire as an advertisement, apparently not realizing it’s already an advertisement.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals wanted it to be part of a campaign to promote vegetarianism in 2009, saying such a diet would help people lose their “spare tire.”

The group offered to maintain the tire in exchange for its use, but Michelin wasn’t interested.

“If they allowed one charity to do it, there would be no end to it,” said Matakas.

Maintenance workers have had to pull arrows from the tire, patch up spots where people tried to break into it, and remove beer bottles from overnight parties around its base.

Someone was able to squeeze into the structure in the 1990s, using it as shelter until the hole was discovered by workers, who discarded the interloper’s mattress.

More famous visitors were McCartney during the Wings’ world tour in 1976, and several members of the Seattle Seahawks when they played in the Super Bowl at Ford Field in 2006.

Uniroyal stuck a gigantic nail into the tire in 1998 to promote its self-repairing tires.

When the nail was removed five years later, real estate agent Ralph Roberts scooped it up for \$3,000, using it to promote his Utica business.

The irrepressible salesman took the 250-pound steel object everywhere imaginable: parades, fundraisers, dinners at restaurants.

When a charity told him the nail wasn’t suitable for a high-lutin event, Roberts dressed it in a tuxedo.

“It’s amazing,” he said. “If anyone has ever been here, they know about the tire.”

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Real people discuss Chevrolet vehicles in GM's new marketing campaign

Chevrolet Uses Real People in Campaign

Chevy decided to get real. But the question is will getting up close and personal with a 2015 Chevrolet car or crossover change a non-Chevy owner's opinion of the brand?

A new marketing campaign that began on April 1 called, "Real People, Not Actors," seeks to answer that question – and to capture people's reactions on video, said GM spokeswoman Cristi Vazquez.

The campaign began when GM gathered together nearly 400 non-Chevrolet owners in Los Angeles.

Participants were introduced to the lineup of Chevrolet cars and crossovers through a series of focus groups; their reactions were incorporated into a series of television commercials and videos on Chevrolet's YouTube channel.

"The idea of the campaign was to see if non-Chevrolet owners

would change their minds when presented with the facts about our products," said Vazquez in an email.

"Going to LA allowed us a large and diverse pool of people who may have outdated notions or not know a lot about today's Chevrolet."

The new work, Vazquez said, advances the brand's "Find New Roads" platform by emphasizing the latest safety features and innovations that are now available in Chevrolet's lineup of cars and trucks.

"The goal is to capture the spontaneous reactions of people as they're exposed to today's Chevrolet," said Paul Edwards, U.S. vice president, Chevrolet marketing. "People are immediately surprised and enthused when they experience our vehicles up close – the designs, technologies, and quality levels far exceed expectations."

The campaign's first spots made their premiere during high-profile network and cable television programming beginning on April 1, continuing across retail, digital and social platforms, displays and activations throughout the year.

It includes content that will be broadcast in both English and Spanish, depending on the particular channel.

The commercial titled "Comparison," features participants surprised by the designs and technologies of the Chevrolet Malibu, Cruze, Equinox and Traverse.

Other content, Vazquez said, humorously shows how difficult it can be to "Keep Your Eyes on the Road" to highlight the text messaging capabilities in the 2015 Cruze.

Additional broadcast work will appear in the coming weeks, Vazquez said.

In Effort to Balance Budget Canada Sheds its GM Stock

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) – The Canadian government has unloaded its multibillion-dollar stake in General Motors.

The finance department said on April 6 that it had sold nearly 73.4 million shares in an unregistered block trade to Goldman, Sachs & Co.

Taxpayers stake in the automaker was worth more than US\$2.69-billion, based on a US\$36.66 price at the close.

The sell-off comes as Canada's Conservative government searches for ways to live up to its promise to balance its books in 2015-16, a long-running pledge that appeared at risk of remaining unfulfilled amid the negative economic impact of the global oil slump.

The government had long reit-

erated its intention to eventually unload the GM shares.

The original 2009 investment was part of the effort to bail out the then-sputtering automaker.

According to the wire service The Canadian Press, Canada was the only North American government still holding stock in GM.

The province of Ontario sold its remaining GM holdings in February, while the U.S. government sold the last of its stake in December of 2013.

Some have urged the government to hang onto the automaker's stock, including the union that represents 7,000 GM workers in Ontario. Unifor economist Jim Stanford has said the value of the stock could continue to rise.



2016 Chevrolet Spark

2016 Spark Lights Up the Crowd at NYC Auto Show

It wasn't all luxury for GM at the recent New York auto show.

Chevrolet introduced the new 2016 Spark at the event. It is a completely redesigned and more "sophisticated" execution of the brand's global minicar, said GM spokeswoman Afaf Farah.

It offers greater efficiency and refinement, along with new, available safety and connectivity features, Farah said. As one of Chevrolet's most global vehicles, the 2016 Spark will be offered in more than 40 markets around the world.

"Chevrolet is fast becoming one of the world's most important mini- and small car manufacturers, offering customers around the globe a new road to the refinement, efficiency and connectivity features that resonate with them," said Alan Batey, president, GM North America and Global Chevrolet.

"The redesigned 2016 Spark builds on a strong legacy and takes the segment to a higher level with features and technologies not typically offered."

The new Spark has a sleeker appearance, thanks to a slightly longer wheelbase, and an overall height about 1.6 inches lower than the current model, Batey said. The lower profile reduces aerodynamic drag to help improve efficiency and interior changes maintain the Spark's traditionally generous headroom.

It is also built on a new, more robust architecture that serves as the foundation for its more sophisticated driving experience. The stronger body structure enabled engineers to tune ride and handling more precisely, for greater feelings of control and refinement, while fostering a quieter ride, said Sam Basile, executive chief engineer.

"At its core, the new Spark is still the fun, agile urban car that made the first-generation model so popular, but it delivers that fun driving experience with greater sophistication," said Basile. "And while it's a truly global car, it is targeted for more developed vehicle markets, allowing engineers to focus more precisely on the materials and technologies that resonate with customers in those markets."

Additional new and enhanced vehicle features include:

- New Ecotec 1.4L I-4 with manual and continuously variable (CVT) transmissions – delivering a GM-estimated 40 mpg on the highway with the available CVT.
 - New available safety features including Side Blind Spot Alert, Lane Departure Warning and Forward Collision Alert.
 - Next-generation Chevrolet MyLink with 7-inch-diagonal color touch screen.
 - Advanced dot-matrix LCD instrument cluster display.
 - Comprehensive lineup of accessory packages for unprecedented personalization options.
- With the instantly recognizable face of a contemporary global Chevrolet, the 2016 Spark is distinguished by a sleeker proportion and aesthetics, said Michael Simcoe, GM International vice president of Design.
- The lower roof height reduces the characteristic upright look of many minicars, while a "shrink-wrapped" body – with the wheels pushed to the edges of the fenders – contribute to a firmly planted presence.
- An evolution of Chevrolet's signature dual-port grille is flanked by large, elliptical headlamps that sweep back into the front fenders. The headlamps have a highly detailed appearance that contribute to the Spark's more sophisticated design.
- "In short, the Spark has grown up," said Simcoe. "It retains a youthful flair, but reflects the maturation of the global minicar market and customers' desires for richly styled and highly contented choices."
- Inside, designers matched the lowered roof height by adjusting the hip-point dimensions for the seats, maintaining the headroom of the current model.
- Upgraded materials, Simcoe said, and greater attention to detail, including everything from the higher-quality fabrics to higher-density seat foam that enhance comfort and durability, add sophistication.
- "You have a greater feeling of sitting in the seats rather than on them," said Simcoe.
- The Spark's new MyLink radio features a capacitive-touch color display, with an icon-based interface like smartphones and other electronic devices, Farah said.

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A view of the Canyon Experience Heads-Up Display.

Virtual Tech Shows Sights

Thanks to new computer technology, you can see your house from any dealer dealership that offers GM's Interactive Canyon Experience.

Whether it's pulling up in front of a restaurant in the city or trailering a camper into the woods, GMC customers can now see how new 2015 GMC Canyon premium midsize pickup looks in that location, thanks to technology that places the driver there using Google Maps and Google Street View, said GM spokesman Brian Goebel.

Beginning April 6, customers have been able to virtually “test drive” a Canyon in four lifestyle environments starting from their neighborhood – or anywhere else, Goebel said.

The Canyon Experience is the first to use Google Maps and Google Street View technology to allow users to “see” a Canyon in their neighborhood, close to their home, Goebel said.

"The Canyon Experience will appeal to the variety of lifestyles and interests of our very diverse audience," said Kenn Bakowski,

Canyon marketing manager. "Customers can learn about the various Canyon attributes that interest them, including capability, safety, the quiet cabin, connectivity and more.

"When they visit the site, customers also can choose different scenarios for their Canyon test drives – city, shore, mountains and rural. They can even 'park' a new Canyon close to their home to see how it looks, and share it socially," Bakowski said. We set out to engage potential Canyon customers in a fun, creative way."

Another byproduct of the Canyon's versatility, Bakowski said, is the range of vehicles of its buyers owned. More than 30 percent of Canyon buyers previously drove a small or midsize crossover, SUV or car. Other Canyon buyers are upgrading from their former midsize pickup or downsizing from a full-size pickup.

In addition, through March, more than 53 percent of Canyon buyers have traded in a non-GM brand vehicle, Bakowski said.

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WABCO Solidifies its Roots In State’s Auto R&D Region

by Jim Stickford

WABCO is on the move. The company, which got its start as the Westinghouse Air Brake Company in the 19th century, recently made plans to expand its engineering capabilities in North America by opening a new commercial Vehicle Development and Testing facility in Rochester Hills.

The company, as part of its expansion plans, is also adding its production facilities in South Carolina as well.

“We’ve been around for more than 120 years,” said WABCO president, Americas Nik Varty. “We are an innovator in the development of advanced safety systems around the world. We just launched our OnGuard systems in March.

“It’s by far the leading solution for collision navigation for commercial vehicles. It really pushes the envelope.”

OnGuard, Varty said, is the first commercial vehicle Collision Safety System with Active Braking.

This “innovative” system, Varty said, can automatically maintain a safe following distance and helps avoid or reduce the impact of rear-end collisions by braking as needed.

“The OnGuard system can activate the brakes – even before driver demand – when it detects unsafe distances between the truck and surrounding vehicle traffic, reducing the time to achieve proper braking pressure. Those extra moments can help prevent a collision or greatly reduce its impact, Varty said.

“OnGuard is so smart, it sees around curves. Its radar sensor technology uses an internal yaw

rate sensor to detect that the host vehicle is driving in a curve and therefore adjusts its prediction of the host vehicle’s traveling path to make objects relevant also driving a curve.”

While being a global supplier of technologies and control systems for commercial vehicles is something of a niche, Varty said, the market is also very competitive.

That means to stay ahead, WABCO has to invest in the development of new systems and technologies. This has turned out to be very good news for Rochester Hills because that’s where the company has decided to invest and expand its engineering capabilities in North America.

“Our customers want more productivity and efficiency from our products,” Varty said. “We have a strong focus on cost and cost of ownership. With all the automotive OEMs being global these days, we are able to help them being global ourselves, and by producing products that adapt to our customers’ needs wherever they are.”

And, if a company is going to have an R&D center to develop global products, Southeast Michigan is a great place to have a facility that can do the research needed, Varty said.

As to the future, WABCO is looking at finding ways to help fleets review the data they obtain during the ordinary operating of their fleets.

“If fleets can track how their vehicles are used, this information can be used to better train drivers and provide better solutions for things like fuel efficiency,” Varty said. “Collecting this information can help do that.”



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