



Chad Jeuchter introduces 2017 Corvette Grand Sport in Geneva.

Chevrolet Emphasizes Corvette's Racing Heritage, Citing 50 Years of Track Experience

Historically, the Corvette has been known as an American car for the American market. But over the past few years, Chevrolet has been working hard to change the minds of people around the world.

That's what made the Geneva Auto Show the perfect place to unveil the new 2017 Corvette Grand Sport on March 1.

This Corvette has racing in its DNA, and is a pure expression of the car's motorsports-bred pedigree, said Chevy spokesman Monte Doran.

Like the 2015 Le Mans-winning Corvette C7.R GTE Pro race car,

the new Grand Sport combines a lightweight architecture, a track-honed aerodynamics package, Michelin tires and a naturally aspirated engine, Doran said, adding that it offers an estimated 1.05g in cornering capability – and up to 1.2g with the available Z07 package.

The vehicle has heritage-inspired design cues and exclusive features that acknowledge the historic Grand Sport legacy, established in 1963 to take on the world's best sports cars, Doran said. Only five were built before a corporate decision suspending direct motorsports involve-

ment ended the project.

"Racing has been part of Corvette's essence for more than 50 years and that track experience has helped us build better, more capable cars," said Mark Reuss, executive vice president of Global Product Development and Global Purchasing and Supply Chain.

"The global acclaim for the seventh-generation Corvette validates that direct link and the 2017 Grand Sport takes its track-bred technology to a new, exciting threshold."

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The Life and Times of Corvette Racing

The 2017 Chevrolet Corvette Grand Sport introduced at the Geneva Auto Show is building on Corvette's storied racing history, said Chevrolet spokesman Monte Doran.

This history stretches back almost 60 years, he said.

Here are some Corvette racing highlights:

- **1960** – Urged by Zora Arkus-Duntov, Corvette's first chief engineer, racer Briggs Cunningham entered three mostly stock Corvettes in the 24 Hours of Le

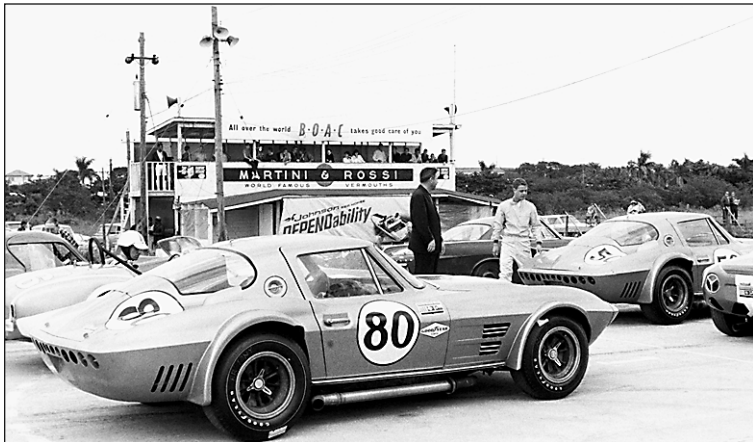
Mans – each powered by the innovative 283 "Fuelie" mechanically fuel-injected small block V8 engine.

In a race dominated by European factory teams, Cunningham's No. 3 Corvette, driven by John Fitch and Bob Grossman, won the large-displacement GT class and finished eighth overall. In fact, the top 10 finishers included six Ferraris, two Aston Martins, a Porsche and the privateer Corvette.

- **1962-1963** – Encouraged by

the European success and similar victories in America, Arkus-Duntov oversaw development of the original Corvette Grand Sport race cars, which were targeted for the 1963 Le Mans race. The plan was to build at least 125 ultra-light, high-powered cars to satisfy homologation rules for the GT production class. Only five were built before a General Motors edict eliminated "factory" racing support. The Grand

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



This 1963 Corvette was driven at Nassau Speedweek by Dick Thompson.

February's U.S. Vehicle Sales Best in 16 Years

Ford, Chrysler Sales Up, GM Down with Increased Jobs, Lower Interest Rates

DETROIT (AP) – Automakers posted big U.S. sales gains last month as consumers – giddy from Super Bowl ads – returned to showrooms after a snowy January.

Ford's sales rose 20 percent over last February, boosted in part by higher sales to rental car

fleets. Fiat Chrysler's rose 12 percent.

General Motors said its sales fell 1.5 percent, partly due to a 39 percent cut in rental sales. Volkswagen, still stinging from its diesel cheating scandal, saw its U.S. sales drop 13 percent.

Consulting firm LMC Auto-

motive predicts an 8.1 percent increase over a year ago to 1.36 million new vehicles. With an annual selling rate of 17.7 million cars and trucks, last month would be the best February in 16 years. Automakers reported monthly sales figures on March 1.

Industry analysts had expected February sales to bounce back after a slight decline in January. One factor: Super Bowl ads.

On Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 7, website visits per dealership were four times higher than any other Sunday in all of 2015, according to Michelle Krebs, a senior analyst with Autotrader.com. Credit applications also hit single-day records last month.

Ford Chief Economist Emily Kolinski Morris said improving job and income growth, as well as low gas prices and low interest rates, are outweighing stock

market volatility in consumers' minds. Buyers are confident, which is key for auto sales.

Proof of that confidence is everywhere. Sales of the Cadillac Escalade, an SUV that starts at \$73,000, were up 22 percent over last February. Sales of Nissan's \$30,000 Murano SUV nearly doubled; so did sales of the \$89,000 Lexus LX SUV. Ford said it was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



A driverless Google car parked after catching a bus – with its bumper.

Autonom-ooops Car Crashes

by JUSTIN PRITCHARD
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) – A self-driving car being tested by Google struck a public bus on a Silicon Valley street, a fender-bender that appears to be the first time one of the tech company's vehi-

cles caused a crash during testing.

Google accepted at least some responsibility for the collision, which occurred on Valentine's Day when one of the Lexus SUVs it has outfitted with sensors and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

'My Car Does What?' Explains Safety Tech

by Jim Stickford

While automakers are adding more safety technology to vehicles than ever, it won't do any good if drivers don't understand the tech and how it works.

That's how Deborah Hersman described the reason for a new public service campaign.

The National Safety Council (NSC), in conjunction with the University of Iowa, launched the new public service campaign at a March 1 Automotive Press Association event at the Detroit Athletic Club.

The campaign, titled, "My Car Does What?" is needed, said Hersman, NSC president, because today's vehicles are more complicated than ever. Plus, said Hersman, a surprising number of drivers don't know everything about the safety technology in their cars.

This ignorance, she said, can be fatal.

"I think vehicle safety technology is slated to be a huge game changer," Hersman said. "Some of this technology is fantastic. Things like parallel parking assist. But, to be honest, I don't

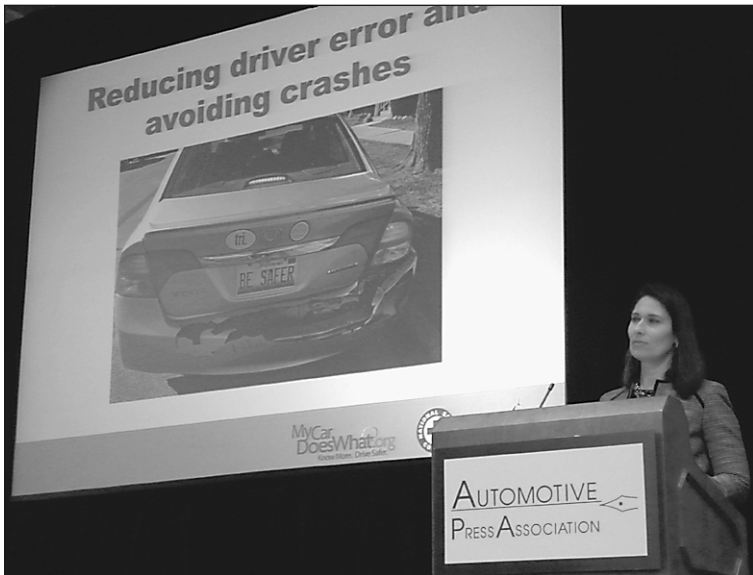
know of anyone killed because of a parallel parking accident."

The causes of most fatal accidents have been known for decades, Hersman said. It's human error. She noted that every car that comes off the assembly line has been built with the idea that the driver can be responsi-

ble for a fatal accident.

"People are human and to be human means getting tired, getting distracted," Hersman said. "The good news is that new technologies can make up for our humanness. If car crashes are a disease,

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Deborah Hersman discusses new automotive safety technology.

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31201 Chicago Road South
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586-939-6800

Contact us:
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Deadline: Thursday 5:00 p.m.
for the next edition of Monday

William Springer II, publisher
Lisa A. Torretta, operations
Jim Stickford, news

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The Life and Times of Corvette Racing

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Sport program officially died before the car made it to Le Mans.

- **1963-64** – Despite GM's racing ban, Arkus-Duntov let the original Grand Sports slip into the hands of private racers, providing the real-world evaluation and technology transfer the gifted engineer was seeking. Roger Penske, A.J. Foyt, Jim Hall and Dick Thompson were among the racing luminaries who drove them.

- **1967** – Arkus-Duntov kept the spirt of the Grand Sport alive through the 1960s, with his hand in heavy-duty brake and larger fuel tank options designed to help racers take production cars from the street to the track. He also was behind the L-88 big block engine program launched in 1967 that would spur a series of racing successes over the next few years.

- **1984** – The Z51 performance handling package was introduced with the launch of the "C4" generation. It would become the preferred choice for owners who took their Corvette to the track.

- **1996** – Chevrolet introduced the Corvette Grand Sport special edition in the final year of the fourth generation. Of the 1,000 built, 810 were coupes and 190 were convertibles.

- **1999** – Corvette Racing returned to the global stage with the fifth-generation model and the C5-R race car. After an impressive debut, the team scored its first of three GTS class wins at Le Mans in 2001. The C5-R also helped secure four consecutive ALMS team and manufacturer titles (2001-04).

- **2005** – Corvette Racing continued its winning ways with the C6.R, which was closer to production models, with its architecture based on the Corvette Z06 and its engine similar to the Z06's 7.0L LS7. It won 39 GT1 races in ALMS, including 12 consecutive wins from 2005 to 2006 and an impressive 25 straight wins from 2007 to 2009.

- **2010** – The Grand Sport was reintroduced in the C6 generation, offering design distinction with the wide chassis of the Z06 – including convertible models. It accounted for more than half of Corvette sales by the close of the sixth generation in 2013.

- **2014** – A new Corvette generation bred the new C7.R race car. Like the previous generation, it used a production Z06 frame for its foundation, but for the first time it was built alongside the production models' frames at the Bowling Green, Ky., assembly plant. The C7.R won the GTE Pro class at Le Mans in 2015.

- **2017** – The Grand Sport returns, leveraging more than 50 years of technology transfer from the track. It's also the first production model to incorporate the chassis and suspension elements of the high-performance supercharged model.

Detroit Automakers Enjoy Brisk February Sales Numbers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the best February for van sales since 1979.

LMC is predicting sales of 17.8 million new vehicles this year, up from 17.46 million last year. But the growth rate is slowing from previous years, and many are expecting a plateau as U.S. demand peaks.

GM said its Chevrolet and GMC brands saw declines in February, but sales improved at Cadillac and Buick.

GM's best seller, the Chevrolet Silverado pickup, had a 5 percent sales decline. GM sold 227,825 cars and trucks last month.

GM said it's trying to lower its reliance on rental sales, which are less profitable and can hurt vehicle resale values.

The company said its sales to commercial and government fleets are up so far this year, but it has sold 30,000 fewer vehicles to rental fleets.

Around 21 percent of the company's February sales went to fleets rather than individual buyers.

It was a different story at Ford. Its U.S. sales chief, Mark LaNeve, said Ford expects heavier fleet sales in the first four months of this year before they taper off.

Thirty-six percent of Ford's

U.S. sales went to fleets in February.

LaNeve defended that percentage, which is unusually high. At Toyota, for example, 16.5 percent of February sales went to fleets.

"We like this business. It's profitable for us, and we manage it very well," LaNeve said.

Ford's luxury Lincoln brand saw sales jump 30 percent after sales of its new MKX SUV more than doubled over last February. Sales of Ford's best seller, the F-Series pickup, were up 10 percent.

Ford sold 217,192 vehicles.

Fiat Chrysler was led by the Jeep brand and the Ram pickup.

Both reported sales increases of 23 percent. The company's truck sales rose 27 percent, but its car sales fell by the same percentage.

Fiat Chrysler sold 149,188 trucks and SUVs last month but only 33,691 cars.

Volkswagen had a few winners. Sales of the Tiguan SUV were up 78 percent, while the German company's electric Golf also saw higher sales.

But the brand's sales will likely continue to fall until it announces a fix for diesels that cheated on U.S. emissions standards. Volkswagen's U.S. sales totaled 22,231 in February.



2016 Chevy Malibu



2016 Ford Edge



2016 Dodge Challenger

Chevrolet Emphasizes Corvette's 50-Year Racing Heritage

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Corvette Grand Sport coupe and convertible go on sale this summer in the U.S. and in the fall in Europe, Doran said.

Engineers adapted the chassis tuning, and upgraded cooling systems and performance technologies of the Corvette Z06 to give the new Grand Sport capability commensurate with its racing-derived history, he said.

"We didn't hold back with the new Grand Sport," said Tadge Juechter, Corvette chief engineer. "For the first time, buyers can equip the Grand Sport with a Z07 performance package – which adds carbon-ceramic brakes, Michelin Sport Cup 2 summer tires, and carbon-fiber aero package that delivers true downforce."

The result, Juechter said, is a potent track car. In fact, the Grand Sport with the Z07 package is less than one second off the track record for the previous-generation Corvette ZR1 on the road course at GM's Milford Proving Ground.

Content highlights for Grand Sport include:

- Michelin Pilot Super Sport summer tires: 285/30ZR19 (front) and 335/25ZR20 (rear);
- Specific Grand Sport wheel

design: 19x10 inches (front) and 20x12 inches (rear);

- Brembo brake system with (355 mm) 14-inch rotors and six-piston calipers in front and (340 mm) 13.4-inch rotors and four-piston calipers in the rear;

- Standard magnetic ride control, specific stabilizer bars and unique springs;

- Standard electronic limited-slip differential;

- LT1 V8 engine rated at (343 kW) 460 hp, with dry-sump oiling system and active exhaust;

- Seven-speed manual transmission with active rev match and available eight-speed paddle-shift automatic with specific performance calibration;
- Available Z07 package adds carbon ceramic-matrix brakes and Michelin Pilot Sport 2 Cup tires.

In addition to track-focused aero elements, the Grand Sport also features specific front fender inserts, a Z06-style grille and wider rear fenders – a distinctive design package that gives the car a track-ready attitude, Doran said. Grand Sport models are offered with the Stingray's full exterior and interior color palette, Doran said. An available Heritage package includes hash-mark fender graphics in six colors, with the hash-mark detail carried

onto the interior's brushed aluminum trim.

"The choices are almost endless," said Harlan Charles, Corvette product marketing manager. "The packages take personalization to an unprecedented level, enabling customers to create their own Corvette Grand Sport statement like no other."

The Grand Sport Collector Edition features an exclusive Watkins Glen Gray Metallic exterior with Tension Blue hash-mark graphics, satin black full-length stripes, black wheels and a

unique Tension Blue full leather and suede-wrapped interior.

The Tension Blue color is a bold, modern take on the hue historically associated with the Grand Sport, Charles said.

Inside, a three-dimensional representation of an original Grand Sport race car is embossed in the headrests and that shape is also used on an instrument panel plaque that carries a unique build sequence number.

The Collector Edition will be offered later in the model year in the U.S. and Europe, Doran said.

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Aluminum and its Alloys – March 28 – 30, 2016

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Eligibility and paperwork requirements must be completed prior to attending.



The Android Auto Update is now available at GM dealers.

Smart Cars Update Just Like Smartphones

U.S. Buick, Cadillac, Chevrolet and GMC dealers now have the software to update eight-inch MyLink systems with Android Auto capability in select 2016 model-year vehicles. The update is only available through General Motors dealers, said GM spokeswoman Afaf Farah.

Owners of 2016 model-year GM vehicles who qualify for the software update will receive a communication from the brand on how to receive the update at no cost, Farah said. The update is expected to take approximately 30 minutes.

"We are working with our dealers to make the software update as quick and easy as possible to minimize any inconvenience to our owners," said Brian Sweeney, U.S. vice president of Chevrolet.

GM models with the seven-inch MyLink system already include both Android Auto and Apple CarPlay capability and therefore do not require any update, Farah said. Apple CarPlay has been integrated with both the seven-inch and eight-inch MyLink systems in select vehicles since the start of the 2016 model year.

2016 model-year Cruze sedans with compatible MyLink systems

will arrive in dealer showrooms with both Android Auto and Apple CarPlay capability installed and will not require the software update, Sweeney said.

Chevrolet offers Android Auto and Apple CarPlay compatibility in more models than any automotive brand. The 14 Chevrolet models include vehicles ranging from the brand's most affordable car, the new 2016 Spark, to its highest-performance model, the Corvette Z06.

Using either application is simple in a compatible 2016 Chevrolet. A "Projection" icon on the MyLink screen is visible when a phone is not connected, then changes to indicate either Apple CarPlay or Android Auto (whichever is applicable) when a compatible phone is connected via USB.

Buick's availability of Android Auto and Apple CarPlay will continue to expand this year with the arrivals of new products to the brand's showrooms. For the 2017 model year, availability will include the Regal and the new LaCrosse, as well as the Envision compact crossover and re-

designed Encore small SUV, said Buick spokesman Stuart Fowle.

GMC's availability of Android Auto and Apple CarPlay will continue to expand this year with the arrival of the new 2017 GMC Acadia when it arrives in showrooms this spring, said GMC spokeswoman Kelly Wysocki.

Android Auto requires a phone running the Android Lollipop 5.0 operating system or higher, while Apple CarPlay requires an iPhone 5 or later. The user interfaces themselves are designed and developed by Apple for Apple CarPlay and Google for Android Auto.

Android Auto will debut in new Cadillac vehicles in March starting with the new 2016 Cadillac CT6 prestige sedan and 2017 Cadillac XT5 crossover. Effective immediately, current customers of 2016 model-year vehicles with Cadillac CUE can get a complimentary software update by making an appointment at a local Cadillac dealer - 2016 SRX excluded, said Cadillac spokesman Steve Martin. Compatible third-party apps need to be downloaded to a phone before using.

Chamber Hosts 'Secrets'

The Macomb County Chamber of Commerce is holding its quarterly "Secrets of My Success" meeting on Tuesday, March 22, from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Shelby Gardens Event and Banquet Center, 50265 Van Dyke in Shelby Township.

"'Secrets of My Success' is a quarterly event in a series of planned conversations with our successful Macomb County entrepreneurs," said Chamber spokeswoman Amy Krauss. "Speakers will share with the audience valuable lessons that they've learned from their own experiences as small business owners. Keynote speaker is Andy Appleby, chairman and CEO of

General Sports and Entertainment. He is the founder of the United Shore Professional Baseball League, which will proudly feature the Utica Unicorns, Eastside Diamond Hoppers and the Birmingham Bloomfield Beavers."

Krauss said the event is being sponsored by FirstState Bank. The doors open at 8 a.m. and a hot breakfast will be served. Tickets are \$30 for Macomb Chamber members and \$40 for non-members.

To learn more about the event, contact Danielle Bare at 586-493-7600.

Her email is danielle@macombcountychamber.com.

Local Songwriter To Visit Library

The Warren public library is hosting a couple of events at the Civic Center Library that might be of interest to the public, said Warren librarian Jennifer Lund.

"On Thursday, March 10, at 6 p.m., musical artist Kitty Donohoe will be here to help us celebrate St. Patrick's Day," Lund said.

The Michigan singer/songwriter "is an Emmy recipient and draws from her Irish heritage as well as her American and Canadian roots for her unique songs," said Lund. "Her music is rich, earthy, and compelling. All ages are welcome but children must be accompanied by an adult."

And, Lund said, the library is offering something a little different for adults at 6 p.m. Thursday, March 31.

"Coloring is just for kids, right?" Lund said. "Not anymore. Adults across the country have picked up coloring books as a fun way to relax and unwind. The health benefits include relaxation, exercising fine motor skills, and training the brain to focus."

The library will supply all the materials plus tea and hot chocolate. "The session is for older teens and adults only," Lund said.

Space for both events is limited. To guarantee a spot, call 586-574-4564.

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Carmakers Bet on High-Tech and SUVs

by DAVID McHUGH
AP Business Writer

GENEVA (AP) – Automakers looking to support sales in the face of global economic uncertainty are betting on new SUVs and the promise of high-tech as they try to outshine each other at the Geneva International Motor Show.

While sales are weak in countries like Russia and Japan, they've been growing steadily in Europe and the U.S., where demand is particularly strong for small SUVs. Buyers are encouraged by cheaper gas and the models' higher riding position and storage room.

Audi presented its new Q2 small SUV, while Opel, the European unit of General Motors, unveiled the Mokka X, an updated version of the existing model. Ford touted its Edge as its flagship SUV in Europe. At just over 4 meters (13 feet), it's small enough to fit into the cramped parking spaces in European cities.

Even as manufacturers pushed shiny metal at the public, which got access to the show March 3, there was much discussion of looming change in the industry as automakers said they were preparing for a future in which self-driving cars would take the road alongside conventional vehicles and better batteries would make electric vehicles more practical.

BMW offered a plug-in hybrid version of its large 7-Series sedan, alongside a gasoline version with a powerful 12-cylinder engine. CEO Harald Krueger said the company's early commitment to electric vehicles and its use of battery power in key models positioned it for a future in which emissions rules become increasingly strict. That's even

though the company sold less than 30,000 electric vehicles last year, out of a record 2.2 million.

"E-mobility is a marathon, not a sprint," Krueger said.

Volkswagen, struggling to regain consumer trust after U.S. authorities found it had equipped vehicles to cheat on diesel emissions test, sketched out a future in which electric power and digitalization would play more important roles in vehicle development.

The company's marketing chief, Juergen Stackmann, shrugged off the antics of a protester who dressed in mechanic's overalls and feigned to repair a car the executive had just driven up in.

"We know that we are the brand that attracts a lot of attention – and we have to live with that," he said. Some 11 million vehicles worldwide are affected by the emissions scandal.

With the industry and the global economy in flux, executives were cautious about the outlook for sales this year.

Renault-Nissan CEO Carlos Ghosn said markets growing more strongly than expected, such as Europe, would be offset by double-digit drops in Russia and flat growth in Japan. "Which means that it will look like 2015" this year, and that the company

would be more cautious about investment in weaker markets.

BMW's Krueger foresaw low single-digit growth in Europe and China.

Daimler AG touted a new diesel engine, despite the extra scrutiny diesel has come under since the Volkswagen emissions scandal.

CEO Dieter Zetsche argued diesel engines are not on the way out. Their lower CO2 emissions make them a practical way to achieve government-mandated emissions goals in Europe, where high fuel prices help make diesels much more popular.

He said Daimler sees two roads toward autonomous driving, in which the car's computers and sensors enable it to stay within lanes and avoid other vehicles and pedestrians – "one being a more evolutionary one" in which automation is gradually added. The other path is completely autonomous driving in limited areas, which then expands.

SUVs and eye-catching, high-end sports cars were a common theme on the display stands. Volkswagen's Bugatti unveiled the Chiron, a 2.4 million-euro (\$2.6 million) sports car with a top speed of 420 kph (261 mph). Orders have already been taken for a third of production, which is limited to 500 vehicles.

Ford Lights Designed With Driver Psychology in Mind

Today's automakers can't leave any stone unturned when designing modern cars. They sweat the details, right down to the lighting.

In the niche world of automotive lighting design, decisions are judiciously made with the knowledge that each of those decisions can impact human psychology, said Ford spokeswoman Francesca Montini.

Consider this familiar scenario, Montini said. At the end of a long workday, there is still a traffic-clogged roadway to contend with on the drive home. Fellow commuters are stuck too, growing impatient, irritable, and often distracted. As the minutes tick away, the sky grows darker. By the time the car pulls into the garage, the driver is grumpy, even a bit depressed.

Montini said Ford lighting designers and engineers say this irritable mental state is, in part, due to poor automobile lighting and the mechanisms humans rely on for coping. The lighting experts at Ford are working to make life a bit brighter.

"We know that gradients and homogeneity affect people's moods," said Arun Kumar, Ford optics expert and design engineer. "We also know the eye wants to focus on contrast changes and other inconsistencies in lighting – it's an automatic function of the brain that can irritate mood."

The latest solution is an LED lighting innovation Ford calls Crystal Diamond Light. The lighting improves efficiency up to 62 percent while lowering cost. It also miniaturizes the fixture, an aesthetic desired by designers. The diamond-like facets of the lens offer even, broad distribution of light.

Crystal Diamond Light first debuted on the Ford F-150, and is now migrating to other models, starting with the new Ford Fusion.

"The efficiency of this lighting not only helps to stabilize the psyche, but also has the potential to affect global environmental savings," said Kumar. "As we democratize this lighting innovation to a broader audience, the impact could be significant, with millions of gallons of fuel poten-



2015 F-150 new light technology

tially saved on a global scale."

Consideration of human physiology is also a factor with interior lighting.

Around the time the world was preparing for Y2K and the predicted doom that would ensue, Ford began work to update its corporate green interior dash lighting. The mandates included choosing a color that is pleasing to the eye – one that provides a higher quality of lighting, with good contrast for twilight and night vision. And because men and women see some colors differently, the shade had to be universally accepted by the color cones of both sexes.

"Another obvious issue was to design for people who have color deficiencies," said Shannon O'Day, Ford interactions and ergonomics core engineer. "You can't use a deep saturated red or green for dash lighting because those are colors people most typically have problems with. Eight percent of the global population has this issue, and most are male."

Red and green are typically reserved for emergency buttons, such as hazard lighting. Designers and engineers opted to light the Ford vehicle dashboard in Ice Blue – a color more easily seen and perceived as brighter by the human eye, and one that cuts through the clutter, said O'Day.

While Ice Blue is the color of choice for illuminating the Ford dashboard, an available feature for many Ford vehicles allows customers to change ambient lighting colors with in-car controls.

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Driverless Car Catches Bus – with Bumper

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cameras hit the side of the bus near the company's headquarters in Mountain View, Calif.

No one was injured, according to an accident report Google wrote and submitted to the California Department of Motor Vehicles. It was posted online Feb. 29.

According to the report, Google's car intended to turn right off a major boulevard when it detected sandbags around a storm drain at the intersection.

The right lane was wide enough to let some cars turn and others go straight, but the Lexus needed to slide to its left within the right lane to get around the obstruction.

The Lexus was going 2 mph when it made the move and its left front struck the right side of the bus, which was going straight at 15 mph.

The car's test driver – who under state law must be in the front seat to grab the wheel when needed – thought the bus would yield and did not have control before the collision, Google said.

While the report does not address fault, Google said in a written statement, "We clearly bear some responsibility, because if our car hadn't moved, there wouldn't have been a collision."

Chris Urmson, the head of Google's self-driving car project, said in a brief interview that he believes the Lexus was moving before the bus started to pass.

"We saw the bus, we tracked the bus, we thought the bus was going to slow down, we started to pull out, there was some momentum involved," Urmson told *The Associated Press*.

He acknowledged that Google's car did have some responsibility but said it was "not black and white."

The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority said none of the 15 passengers or the driver of the bus was injured.

The transit agency is reviewing the incident and hasn't reached any conclusions about liability, its spokeswoman Stacey Hendler Ross said in a written statement.

There may never be a legal decision on fault, especially if damage was negligible – as both sides indicated it was – and neither Google nor the transit authority pushes the case.

Still, the collision could be the first time a Google car in autonomous mode caused a crash.

Google cars have been involved in nearly a dozen collisions in or around Mountain View since starting to test on city streets in the spring of 2014. In most cases, Google's cars were rear-ended.

No one has been seriously injured.

Google's written statement called the Feb. 14 collision "a classic example of the negotiation that's a normal part of driving – we're all trying to predict each other's movements."

Google said its computers have reviewed the incident and engineers changed the software that governs the cars to understand that buses may not be as inclined to yield as other vehicles.

Jessica Gonzalez, a spokeswoman for California's DMV, which regulates Google's testing of about two dozen Lexus SUVs in the state, said agency officials spoke last week with Google but would have no comment.

Under state law, Google must retain data from the moments before and after any collision.

"As far as he-said she-said, there shouldn't be any of that. It's all there," said Robert W. Peterson, an insurance law expert at Santa Clara University who has studied self-driving cars.

A critic of Google's self-driving car efforts said the collision shows the tech giant should be

kept from taking onto public streets self-driving prototypes it built without a steering wheel or pedals.

Google sees that as the next natural step for the technology, and has pressed California's DMV and federal regulators to authorize cars in which humans have limited means of intervening.

"Clearly Google's robot cars can't reliably cope with everyday driving situations," said John M. Simpson of the nonprofit Consumer Watchdog.

"There needs to be a licensed driver who can take over, even if in this case the test driver failed to step in as he should have."

Toyota Adds 331K To Recall to Fix Takata Air Bags

DETROIT (AP) – Toyota is adding 331,000 cars worldwide to an existing recall of passenger air bags made by Japanese supplier Takata Corp.

The new recall includes the 2008 Corolla and Corolla Matrix sedans and the 2008-10 Lexus SC430 convertible.

Almost 200,000 of the cars are in the United States.

Toyota previously recalled the same vehicles from earlier model years. It added more based on new information from Takata on March 2.

Takata air bags can inflate with too much force and spew shrapnel into the vehicle, injuring drivers and passengers.

Ten deaths worldwide have been blamed on the air bag problem.

Toyota says it isn't aware of any injuries related to the latest recall, but there have been occupants injured in some of the 15.3 million vehicles it has recalled worldwide.

Toyota will notify owners and replace the air bags for free.

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‘My Car Does What?’ Plan Explains Safety Technology

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

then technology can be the cure.”

But if people don’t know about the technology in their vehicles or how the tech works, then all the latest advances can be wasted, Hersman said. The number of automotive fatalities increased 8 percent, to about 38,000, between 2014 and 2015. That’s the largest increase in 50 years.

Hersman said one reason is that, with the improving economy, more people are driving longer distances. More driving means more accidents. But the increase in driving between 2014 and 2015 was only 3 percent.

So, Hersman said, what accounts for the additional 5 percent increase in deaths?

Addressing that question was Daniel McGehee, director of the Transportation and Vehicle Safety Research Program at the University of Iowa, a group that has been working with the National Safety Council by studying the question of automotive safety.

“Data is king,” McGehee said. “So we conducted a national survey to see what people knew about their vehicles. We learned that people knew what things like anti-lock brakes and adaptive cruise control are. But technology like lane departure warning and forward collision warning are less well-known.”

The survey, McGehee said, revealed that at one point or another, people will react when startled by such technology in a way that surprises them. And being surprised can be one way an accident happens, he said.

He said technology is changing so rapidly that it’s even difficult for salespeople to keep up.

McGehee said that while there

is a lot of useful information in driver’s manuals, they aren’t the easiest to read.

“The bottom line of the study is that we’ve learned that a lot of consumers are uncertain about the new safety technologies,” McGehee said. “Consumers may have heard of features, but have no experience with them. Take, for example, the tire gauge light. It might pop on during the winter, but consumers might not understand what it means.”

Hersman said that once the NSC understood the gaps in consumer knowledge, the next step was to design an education program that will reach consumers in a variety of different demographics.

To that end, the NSC created a Web site – mycardoeswhat.org – with videos informing viewers about various safety features. The NSC has also created an ambassador program to reach out to the public and will also use social media as a venue of communication. They have also reached out to various states’ departments of motor vehicles.

That way, Hersman said, people waiting in line at DMVs can watch videos informing them about their cars.

“Everyone wants safer driving,” Hersman said. “The average age of a car on the road today is 11 years. There are a lot of drivers who are unfamiliar with the new technology and they will be buying cars with it in the future.”

But, she said, technology is constantly changing and just because you know something today, doesn’t mean you’ll know it tomorrow. That’s why education, she said, is an important step in making driving safer for everyone.

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Autonomous Cars May Come About More Gradually

GENEVA (AP) – Cars that drive themselves would mean a revolution in how people get around.

But they might arrive just as much by evolution, with everyday cars getting gradually smarter, as by sudden shifts to fully self-driving vehicles.

Autonomous driving – and its potential for sweeping change – was much on the minds of top auto executives at the Geneva International Motor Show.

The exhibit space in Geneva was mostly used for the show's primary purpose: showing off product to the news media and the public in order to boost sales. The display stands were dominated by expensive sports and luxury cars for the rich and new SUVs for more middle-class buyers.

But the future beyond the upcoming model year was very much a topic of discussion, if less visible on the display stands. Executives think that cars that drive themselves at least part of the time may be upon us by the end of this decade. Technology such as autonomous driving by cars equipped with cameras and radar sensors could blend with Internet connections and apps. For instance, a car could be ordered for a few hours through an app and drive itself to the customer.

Google, meanwhile, is testing completely autonomous cars on streets in Mountain View, Calif., as well as in Austin, Texas, and Kirkland, Wash.

Daimler CEO Dieter Zetsche said his company sees "two roads to full autonomy, one being the more evolutionary one where basically more and more assistance systems kind of automatically lead to a fully autonomous car.

"The other one is more revolutionary ... where first in restricted areas you have fully autonomous cars and over time you expand the area where you can do that. And I would say in restricted areas you can see fully autonomous cars in the latter path around the turn of the decade."

Some vehicles at the Geneva show made the case for evolution. The Mercedes-Benz E-Class luxury sedan already offers optional driver assistance technology. The latest version of the car can avoid collisions at intersections by recognizing crossing traffic and braking.

Fiat Chrysler Merges with Media Mogul

MILAN (AP) – Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and the publisher Gruppo Editoriale L'Espresso SpA have announced a merger to create "a leading player in the Italian media and publishing businesses."

Fiat, which owns the Turin daily La Stampa, said March 2 it has signed a memorandum of understanding to merge its editorial operation with L'Espresso, publisher of the Rome daily La Repubblica and L'Espresso weekly magazine.

The deal brings together two of Italy's top industrialist families under new generation management – Fiat's largest shareholder the Agnelli family and the De Benedetti family, which controls L'Espresso.

The move comes six months after the Agnelli family's Exor Group bought a 50 percent stake in the Economist magazine.

Fiat said the Italian merger had "potential for significant revenue and synergies."

The value of the deal wasn't disclosed.