

Chrysler Volunteers Encourage Reading

by Jim Stickford

They say that the best way to encourage the development of good habits is to get people while they're young. And that's exactly what Fiat Chrysler volunteers are doing when they donate their time to the "Read to a Child" charity.

On March 23, 43 Fiat Chrysler volunteers came to Herrington Elementary in Pontiac to read to students at the school.

Kim Bormann, a program manager with "Read to a Child" said that while the group exists on a national basis, it operates locally. "We're a children's literacy organization," Bormann said. "We

pair up with local business professionals and have them go to areas that are underserved. The volunteers come to the schools on a weekly basis and read to the kids during lunch hour."

Bormann said the program is for students in kindergarten up

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Neil Levins, left, and Walt Bartels read to Herrington Elementary first graders in Pontiac.



2016 Chevrolet Malibu Hybrid

2016 Malibu Hybrid Hits 47 MPG with Latest Tech

Who said a hybrid car has to look dull? Not Chevrolet.

The 2016 Malibu Hybrid gives consumers great mileage that is accompanied with stylish looks, said GM spokeswoman Courtney Moats.

Offering a segment-best EPA-estimated 46-mpg combined fuel economy rating, the 2016 Chevrolet Malibu Hybrid is an efficient midsize sedan driving Chevrolet into the future with uncompromising comfort, connectivity and driving dynamics, Moats said.

It leverages drive system components and software from the

plug-in Chevrolet Volt to provide all-electric propulsion in some driving scenarios, along with power to assist the gas engine, Moats said. Additional technologies contribute to EPA-estimated mileage ratings of 47 mpg city and 46 mpg highway. No other 2016 midsize sedan hybrid offers higher EPA-estimated city mileage.

"The Malibu Hybrid offers outstanding fuel efficiency and integrates the latest technology to give customers a world-class hybrid," said Steve Majoros,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Detroit 3 Take Top Honors In 'Brand Image Awards'

Kelley Blue Book had some nice things to say about Detroit automakers in its annual 2016 Brand Image Awards.

The company named Chrysler the "Best Car Styling Brand" as part of its 2016 Kelley Blue Book Brand Image Awards. GMC was named "Most Refined Brand" while Buick was named "Best Value Luxury Brand" and Ford was named "Best Overall Truck Brand" by editors.

"When it comes to design at FCA, it isn't just a job; it's passion and creativity that our designers live and breathe every day," said Ralph Gilles, head of Design, FCA - Global. "We are enjoying the process of redesigning and reimagining the brand quite literally from the inside out."

Chrysler brand vehicles include the all-new Chrysler Pacifica, 200, 300 and Town & Country.

The 2016 Kelley Blue Book Brand Image Awards recognize automakers' outstanding achievements in creating and maintaining brand attributes that capture the attention and enthusiasm of new-vehicle buyers, said Fiat Chrysler spokesman Rick Deneau. Brand Image Award winners are determined by evaluating annual new-car buyer perception data and award categories are calculated among luxury, non-luxury and truck shoppers.

Deneau said that according to the editors at Kelley Blue Book, wrote that the choice of Chrysler winning the 2016 Best Car Styling Brand, driven by the 300.

"The boldly styled Chrysler 300 full-size sedan has long been a styling standout, and now the

automaker is turning even more heads with the recently redesigned Chrysler 200 midsize sedan," Kelley editors wrote. "While the two cars don't even look related - the 200 is curvaceous, the 300 is chiseled - each looks like nothing else on the road. There's a stronger family resemblance inside, where both sedans offer up soft, richly appointed passenger cabins. Chrysler's history of distinctive design is still being written today."

"Receiving this award from Kelley Blue Book reaffirms the Chrysler brand's long reputation as a leader in design, performance and innovative technology, all at a great value," said Tim Kuniskis, head of Passenger Car Brands - Dodge, SRT, Chrysler and Fiat, FCA - North America. "This award is an honor for Chrysler as it is based on consumer perceptions of our brand."

Ford spokesman Mike Levine said that Ford has won the Kelley Blue Book award seven out of the eight times it's been given out.

Kelley editors wrote "Ford's F-Series isn't only the best-selling truck line in America for 39 years running, it's been the best-selling vehicle altogether for 34 of those years. Ford continues to give truck buyers what they want: best-in-class towing and payload capacity, a cabin filled with lux and tech amenities, performance that can cause an adrenaline rush, and a low starting price. Plus, Ford uses innovation to make it easier to tow, get work

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2015 Buick Encore



2015 F-150



2015 Chrysler 300

Hybrids, Electric Vehicles Do More Than Save Gas

NEW YORK (AP) - When Toyota aired a Super Bowl television ad featuring a surprisingly quick Prius gas-electric hybrid eluding police, it marked a turning point for the auto industry.

For years, automakers pushed fuel efficiency to sell hybrid and electric vehicles. Now, in an era of cheap gasoline, the message is: These cars are faster and quieter than their gas-powered counterparts. And, yes, you still save on fuel.

"They've graduated out of the class of something that's a bit of an oddity to drive," says Mike O'Brien, vice president of product planning for Hyundai. "It's all about making these cars better."

Until now, hybrids and electrics have largely appealed to the environmentally-conscious crowd. The vehicles cost thousands of dollars extra, and although drivers eventually recouped their money in fuel savings, the vehicles lacked the power and handling of gas-powered rivals. Electrics also suffered from driver concern that the battery could run out of juice on a trip.

Now, the tide is slowly turning. General Motors and Tesla will bring electric vehicles to market next year priced around \$30,000, including a \$7,500 federal tax credit. Battery range has improved significantly, experts expect gasoline prices to eventually climb higher, and the advent of autonomous vehicles favors motors powered by electricity over gas.

At the New York International

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31201 Chicago Road South
Warren, Michigan 48093

586-939-6800

Contact us:
Info@DetroitAutoScene.com

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Jim Stickford, news

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GM, Lyft Launch New Rental App Platform System

Lyft and General Motors launched their Express Drive short-term rental program exclusive to the Lyft platform, on March 15.

The program will make cars available to Lyft drivers at affordable rates with insurance and maintenance included, said GM spokeswoman Annalisa Bluhm.

The launch of Express Drive comes two months after GM entered into a strategic alliance with Lyft to develop an integrated on-demand network of autonomous vehicles.

Express Drive begins later this month in Chicago and will soon roll out to additional cities including Boston, Washington D.C., Baltimore and others, Bluhm said. With Express Drive, the more you drive, the less you pay. Express Drive will start at \$99 USD per week including insurance and maintenance making Express Drive the most flexible and affordable option.

When drivers complete 65 rides a week in Chicago, drivers will be able to access a vehicle at no weekly rental cost, Bluhm said. In addition to affordability, Express Drive offers flexible terms for drivers who can rent cars on a weekly basis for up to eight weeks at a time.

There is a definite need for access to high-quality GM cars for Lyft, Bluhm said. In Chicago alone, there were 60,000 people who applied to drive on the Lyft platform, but did not have a car that qualified. Express Drive directly addresses this need for millions of Americans who do not have access to a qualifying vehicle.

In Chicago, Express Drive will provide access to Chevrolet Equinox crossovers equipped with OnStar, additional connectivity features as well as ample cargo space and flexible seating for up to five.

“Launching Express Drive is another way we treat drivers better, in addition to Power Driver Bonus, tips and same day payouts. We’re making sure everyone who wants to be a Lyft driver can be, by providing ultimate flexibility at incredible rates,” John Zimmer, Lyft’s president and co-founder, said.

GM President Dan Ammann said, “We’re very pleased with how quickly the GM and Lyft team collaborated to create the Express Drive program, which we will be implementing using our Maven mobility infrastructure.”

Lyft was founded in June 2012 by Logan Green and John Zimmer to reconnect people and communities through better transportation.

Lyft is the fastest growing rideshare company in the U.S. and is available in more than 200 cities, Bluhm said. Lyft is preferred by drivers and passengers for its safe and friendly experience, and its commitment to affecting positive change for the future of our cities.

2016 Malibu Hybrid Hits 47 MPG with Latest Technology

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marketing director of Chevrolet Cars and Crossovers. “Combined with a number of available, leading safety and connectivity features, it’s a great choice for those who want exceptional efficiency with Chevrolet’s signature value.”

The 2016 Malibu Hybrid starts at \$28,645 (including destination charge) and is based on the LT trim. It shares many of its attributes with the entire Malibu lineup, which was redesigned for 2016 and features a longer wheelbase for greater comfort. It is also nearly 300 pounds lighter than its predecessor for improved driving feel and greater fuel economy.

Standard features include Chevrolet MyLink with Apple

CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility, for high-level connectivity, and access to select phone apps such as music, maps and others right from MyLink’s 7-inch-diagonal color touch screen. (Data plan rates and privacy statements apply and require a compatible smartphone.)

Malibu Hybrid offers 10 standard airbags, a rear-vision camera, cruise control and push-button start with passive entry, Moats said.

Additional active safety features offered with the Malibu Hybrid include Lane Keep Assist, Front Pedestrian Braking, Rear Vision Camera and Low Speed Automatic Braking.

Teen Driver is available and allows parents to automatically activate safety features and view their teenager’s driving habits,

while managing certain settings including speed warnings, radio volume limits and more, to help reinforce safe driving. It is the first system in the industry to allow parents to view how their teen drove the vehicle via the in-vehicle report card.

The 2016 Malibu Hybrid is driven by a new, direct-injected 1.8L engine mated to a two-motor drive unit.

The drive unit is based on the one used in the 2016 Chevrolet Volt and provides additional power to assist the engine during acceleration, for 182 horsepower of total system power.

The engine also features Chevrolet’s first application of Exhaust Gas Heat Recovery, or EGHR, technology, which uses exhaust heat to warm the engine and cabin. EGHR improves en-

gine warm-up and helps offer consistent fuel economy performance in cold weather. Additional fuel economy benefits come from Exhaust Gas Recirculation, or EGR.

An 80-cell, 1.5 kWh lithium-ion battery pack provides electric power to the hybrid system. It can power the Malibu Hybrid up to 53 miles per hour on electricity alone.

The gasoline-powered engine automatically comes on at higher speeds and high loads to provide additional power.

In addition to the drive unit, the Malibu Hybrid also shares the 2016 Volt’s blended regenerative braking system, which provides maximum kinetic energy recovery during braking to be stored in the battery system to help maintain charge, Moats

Millennials Taste in Vehicles Change as They Grow Older

The documented wants of the Millennials have tended to lean toward things like reality TV and skinny jeans.

But as this generation gets older and begins to start families, one other desire has been cited by demographers – space in their automobiles, said Ford spokesman William Mattiace. The Ford Explorer is the SUV that meets that demand.

Explorer is the most popular Ford SUV with millennial buyers ages 25 to 34, according to Ford analysis of the most recent personal new vehicle registrations in the U.S. from IHS Automotive – helping Explorer maintain its status as the best-selling midsize SUV in the country, said Erich Merkle, Ford’s U.S. sales analyst.

“It’s an example of need-based growth,” said Merkle. “Millennials have begun forming families and those families are growing – in terms of the number of children as well as the size of those children. Explorer provides the space those families need today and tomorrow, while maintaining the image they want to project.”

The trend mirrors that of Millennials moving from urban areas and purchasing homes in the suburbs, Merkle said. According to National Association of Realtors, the median age of first-time homebuyers is 30 – the age when many people settle down and begin having children.

At the same time, Explorer has become a hot seller with women. Explorer is the most preferred midsize SUV among women buyers, Merkle said according to IHS personal registration data.

Spurred in part by Explorer’s appeal to millennials and women, sales of Ford SUVs are off to their best calendar year start in history, posting increases in January and February that are double the increases of the domestic SUV market, Merkle said.

Year-to-date, Ford SUVs posted a record 115,228 sales at retail – up 16 percent over last year. Last month – the company’s best-ever February for SUVs – sales were up 28 percent over 2015, fueled by large increases for all six Ford SUV nameplates. Explorer sales in the United States were up 18 percent in February and 7 percent year-to-date.

Similarly, Escape sales in the United States rose 14 percent in February and 5 percent year-to-date. The new 2017 Escape – with a host of available features including SYNC 3, enhanced active park assist and two EcoBoost engines – is due in showrooms this spring, Merkle said. Edge sales in the United States increased 91 percent in February and 56 percent year-to-date.

Sales are up across Ford’s entire SUV lineup in the United States. Expedition sales rose 22



The 2016 Explorer provides the space young families need.

percent in February and 19 percent year-to-date; Flex sales rose 77 percent last month, 56 percent year-to-date; Police Interceptor Utility was up 50 percent for February, 30 percent year-to-date.

Regional highlights tell coast-

to-coast success stories, Merkle said. Explorer sales in New York City were up 23 percent in February and 18 percent year-to-date; in Washington, D.C., Explorer was up 47 percent in February and 21 percent year-to-date.

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FCA's 2017 Fiat 124 Spider Hits the U.S. Market

Continuing the legacy of Karl Abarth's performance-inspired vehicles known for their rich racing heritage, the 2017 Fiat 124 Spider Elaborazione Abarth makes its debut at this year's New York International Auto Show, said Fiat Chrysler spokeswoman Angela Bianchi.

The Fiat 124 Elaborazione Abarth is the heir of the roadster that drove Fiat to its first European Rally Championship win in the 1970s, Bianchi said. Applying the Abarth formula, the new 124 Spider is designed and built for thrills and performance. Key Abarth features include rear-wheel drive, a sophisticated suspension and a four-cylinder turbocharged MultiAir 1.4 Turbo engine with best-in-class 160 horsepower that is available with a six-speed manual or six-speed automatic gearbox with paddle shift.

The 2017 Fiat 124 Spider Elaborazione Abarth is the latest addition to the Fiat 124 Spider lineup, offering added performance features for a sportier, more spirited driving experience. While all Fiat 124 Spider models deliver responsive handling and excellent power-to-weight ratio in a robust rear-wheel-drive package, Bianchi said, the Elaborazione Abarth model builds on the Spider's engaging driving dynamics to offer even more fun for performance enthusiasts.

"Our new Fiat 124 Spider is an iconic roadster that combines classic Italian styling with modern performance and technology," said Olivier Francois, head of

Fiat Brand, FCA - Global. "The addition of our new 2017 Fiat 124 Spider Elaborazione Abarth further enhances the driving experience and offers yet another head-turning, fun-to-drive vehicle to our customers."

The 2017 Fiat 124 Spider Elaborazione Abarth features the proven turbocharged 1.4-liter MultiAir four-cylinder engine, delivering 160 horsepower and 184 lb.-ft. of torque and is paired with either a six-speed manual transmission or a six-speed automatic transmission with paddle shifters, Bianchi said. The Elaborazione Abarth-exclusive Sport Mode changes the calibrations of the engine, automatic transmission, electric power steering and dynamic stability control system to ensure a sporty, responsive and performance-oriented driving experience.

A mechanical limited slip differential, featuring a low torque bias ratio, provides improved traction and handling, as well as improved launch performance and power delivery during cornering, Bianchi. The Elaborazione Abarth's unique sport suspension includes mono-tube Bilstein front and rear shock absorbers for increased traction and more precise handling. The available Brembo braking system with 17-inch alloy wheels offers monoblock aluminum calipers with four pistons, allowing for improved braking.

The all-new 2017 Fiat 124 Spider revives the storied nameplate, bringing its classic Italian



The Fiat 124 Spider Abarth

styling and performance to a new generation. Paying homage to the original 124 Spider nearly 50 years after its introduction, the 2017 Fiat 124 Spider delivers the ultimate Italian roadster experience with driving excitement, technology and safety combined

with iconic Italian design.

The 2017 Fiat 124 Spider lineup also includes the Classica and Lusso models.

To celebrate the return of the classic nameplate, Bianchi said the first 124 vehicles will be offered as a limited-edition Prima

Edizione Lusso, featuring an exclusive color combination and commemorative badging just for the occasion.

The all-new Fiat 124 Spider will arrive in Fiat studios in North America beginning in summer 2016.

Ground Breaks on Rochester College's New Sports Arena

Rochester College in Rochester Hills broke ground on the Garth Pleasant Arena on Friday, April 22.

The Oakland Press reported that the city has approved the engineering plans and architectural work, and final bid packages will be received by the end of March.

In a statement to the media,

college officials reported that the excitement for this gym has been building and that the new structure should be ready by February of 2017.

Junior education major Olivia Feldman said the new gym will serve as a large gathering spot to enhance RC's community.

"This would be very beneficial to the spirit of our campus com-

munity," Feldman said. "We need a place to rally together, support one another and bond during powerful fellowship experiences."

The facility will seat 868 for basketball and volleyball with a maximum capacity of more than 1,500 including floor seating. It will also include VIP seating and viewing.

Chrysler, Pontiac Schools Promote Student Reading

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for students in kindergarten up to the fourth grade. The volunteers read at levels appropriate to the students' ages.

"Read to a Child" is currently works with three schools in Detroit as well as Herrington in Pontiac, Bormann said.

"We provide the books," Bormann said. "They can range from picture books for the youngest children to chapter books, which are books that are divided into chapters and don't depend on pictures to tell the story. We try to have the books be at a slightly higher reading level than where the children are."

This helps push the students and encourage them to develop their reading skills, Bormann said.

Walt Bartels, a human resources business partner at Fiat Chrysler, picked "Read to a Child" as a group charitable activity because he and his fellow volunteers really think that helping kids develop a love of reading is a valuable thing.

"Today's volunteers are mostly from Fiat Chrysler's Human Resources department," Bartels said. "We have 43 volunteers and we started signing them up about six weeks ago. We got involved after two of the 43 volunteers suggested reading. They had been volunteering on their own and wanted to expand the program."

Bartels, along with Neil Levins, a health wellness manager at Fiat Chrysler, read the book "Frog and Toad Together" to the first grade class of Ailene Steinberg-Love.

While Levins read to the children, Martels showed the children the pages of his copy of the book, which had pictures, to the children as they listened.

Levins said before he started reading that he grew up in Boston and New York and had a bit of an accent, so asked the children be patient with him in case they couldn't understand what he said.

Steinberg-Love said that she's been a first grade teacher for 20 years and decided to become a teacher because she herself struggled in school.

"I thought there must be an easier way to learn," Steinberg-Love said.

"So I decided to become a teacher. I got my master's degree in reading education because that was the area where I really struggled. It's a really good feeling to help kids read above their grade levels."

Fiat Chrysler spokesman Kevin Frazier said that, in total, Fiat Chrysler volunteers were able to read to 15 classes at Herrington on March 23.

"That's about 400 students," Frazier said. "Our volunteer readers will be coming back to the school to read for the rest of the year."

And Frazier said, all the children will receive their own copies of the books that were read to them.

"As part of the Fiat Chrysler volunteer effort," Frazier said, "we provide the books to the students. What was selected for reading was chosen by 'Read to a Child.'"

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Hemi-powered Driver Makes Final Round

For a second year in a row, Ron Capps fought his way to a final round appearance at Gainesville Raceway, but while the defending winner didn't come away with his fourth coveted Wally from the 47th annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) on March 20 Gatornationals as he had hoped, his two final round appearance so far this season aboard his Don Schumacher Racing Dodge Charger R/T have him just one point out of the Funny Car points lead.

Capps arrived at the traditional East Coast opener for the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series atop the standings on the merit of his title win at the season opening Winternationals at Pomona, then qualified his Hemi-powered flopper fifth for eliminations. From that position he got past John Hale, Cruz Pedregon, as well as DSR teammate and No. 1 qualifier Jack Beckman to advance to a final showdown against Robert Hight.

Capps found himself on the losing end of a traction battle against the John Force Racing driver, also ceding the points lead to Hight, which he had been in since the start of the 2016 season.

"I was confident that we were going to go up there against Hight and run in the (3.90-second range) and if they beat us, they beat us," Capps said. "But we went out and pulled the tires loose pretty violently. I was trying to catch it and then Robert smoked his but was able to catch it quicker. All in all we ended up qualifying good again and made it to our second final round this year. It hurts now but in a couple of days it will feel better because we got to the final round again. But when you get to the final you expect to win it."

Cybersecurity Hits Detroit

STERLING HEIGHTS, Mich. (AP) – Businesses are getting access to a new, secure computer lab in suburban Detroit that's part of an effort to hone software and train specialists in cyberdefense.

The facility in Sterling Heights is linked to the Michigan Cyber Range, offering a place for training and exercises to simulate data hacks and test the effectiveness of software or networks for defense contractors, the auto industry and other businesses.

Jennifer Tisdale, cyberprogram manager for the defense and auto offices of the Michigan Economic Development Corp., said the lab is a place for businesses to work securely and should help boost collaboration between companies, the state and others on cybersecurity.

"This is an opportunity for us as a state to educate industry on what is coming and what they can do," Tisdale said in an interview ahead off an opening event March 18.

The lab is located at the Velocity Collaboration Center, a business incubator. It's expected to serve as a resource for companies developing connected and autonomous driving technologies, for example, as well as showcasing job opportunities in cybersecurity.

The lab is isolated from the rest of the Velocity center as part of an effort to keep the technology being used inside secure. Those going to work in the lab must leave their cellphones behind, Tisdale said, and what goes on inside is designed to stay secret.

Similar training centers are planned in other parts of the state, Tisdale said.



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Ford Motor Company's New Subsidiary Aims to Handle Mobility Market Needs

Ford Motor Company created Ford Smart Mobility LLC, a new subsidiary formed to design, build, grow and invest in emerging mobility services, said Ford spokesman Mike Moran. Jim Hackett, former Steelcase vice chairman and CEO, is leaving his position on the Ford Board of Directors to serve as chairman of the new subsidiary.

Ford Smart Mobility LLC is part of Ford's expanded business model to be both an auto and a mobility company, Moran said. The company is continuing to focus on and investing in its core business – designing, manufacturing, marketing, financing and servicing cars, SUVs, trucks and electrified vehicles.

At the same time, Ford aggressively is pursuing emerging opportunities through Ford Smart Mobility, the company's plan to be a leader in connectivity, mobility, autonomous vehicles, the customer experience and data and analytics.

"Ford Smart Mobility and expanding into mobility services are significant growth opportunities," said Mark Fields, president and CEO, Ford Motor Company. "Our plan is to quickly become part of the growing transportation services market, which already accounts for \$5.4 trillion in annual revenue. Jim Hackett is the right visionary leader – with extensive experience in business development and design – to take us into the mobility services business in the future."

The new Ford Smart Mobility LLC will build on the products, technologies and Ford Smart Mobility innovations and work already under way at Ford, Moran said. Working with Ford's existing product development, research and advanced engineering, marketing and data analytics teams – which will remain unchanged – the subsidiary will develop commercially ready mobility services and invest in promising mobility-related ventures.

Designed to compete like a startup company, Ford Smart Mobility LLC will design and build mobility services on its own, and collaborate with startups and tech companies.

"Ensuring the freedom of mobility requires us to continually look beyond the needs of today and interpret what mobility will mean to future generations," said Bill Ford, executive chairman, Ford Motor Company. "This new subsidiary will enable us to develop mobility solutions to address the rapidly changing transportation challenges of an increasingly crowded world."

Reporting to Mark Fields, Hackett, as chairman of Ford Smart Mobility LLC, will lead a team of business and technology leaders from inside and outside the company, Moran said.

As a consumer-focused, visionary leader in the office furniture industry, Hackett is credited with expanding Steelcase's business model and becoming a global innovator. During his 30 years there, he helped transform the company from a traditional office furniture manufacturer to a company that would change the way people work. This included predicting that the office landscape would shift away from cubicles to an open space environment, giving employees the flexibility to work where they want.

"I am absolutely thrilled to lead Ford's mobility business into the future," said Hackett. "Transportation in the world today is on the cusp of a major revolution, and Ford plans to lead the way by changing the way the world moves through Ford Smart Mobility."

A member of the Ford Motor Company Board of Directors

since 2013, Hackett served on the Audit, Sustainability and Innovation, and Nominating and Governance committees. He resigned from the Ford Board effective March 10 to join Ford Smart Mobility LLC.

The world is becoming more crowded and urbanized, air quality is a global issue, and customer preferences are changing rapidly, Moran said. The Ford Smart Mobility plan was established early last year to use technology and innovation to address these trends and to make people's lives better. Already, significant progress has been made, including:

- **Connectivity:** Ford is a leader in vehicle connectivity with the most popular entertainment and communications system in the industry, Ford SYNC. This year, an all-new, more intuitive SYNC 3 system is being offered on Ford and Lincoln vehicles. In addition, new SYNC Connect gives owners the ability to remotely access vehicle features, including a remote start, unlocking doors, checking fuel level or locating a parked vehicle on a smartphone. Additionally, SYNC includes AppLink, which enables drivers to voice-control smartphone apps from the driver's seat – allowing drivers to keep their eyes on the road and hands on the wheel.

- **Mobility:** For the past 14 months, Ford has conducted more than 30 global mobility experiments to gain insight into changing consumer transportation preferences. Several ongoing pilot programs are under way, including: GoPark, which builds a predictive parking system in London capable of directing drivers to streets where they are most



James Hackett

likely to find a space; GoDrive, a car sharing program in London that provides vehicles with guaranteed parking at busy locations, such as London City Airport; and Dynamic Shuttle, a program at Ford's Dearborn, Michigan, campus that allows employees and visitors to summon point-to-point rides on-demand.

- **Autonomous Vehicles:** This year will have the largest test fleet of autonomous vehicles of any automaker – with vehicles on the road in California, Arizona and Michigan. Ford also is the first to test autonomous vehicles in the snow – a major step in the company's plan to bring fully autonomous vehicles to millions of customers worldwide. At the same time, Ford is tripling its engineering investment in driver assist and semi-autonomous vehicle technology – such as adaptive cruise control, active park assist, lane-departure warning, lane-keeping aid, pedestrian detection, Pro Trailer Backup Assist and vehicle-to-vehicle connection technology – during the next five years.

Chrysler Wins Women Award

The Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC) has named Fiat Chrysler one of America's Top Corporations supporting Women's Business Enterprises (WBEs).

WBENC's Top Corporations award is the only national award honoring corporations that promote policies and programs that support the growth and sustainability of women-owned businesses, said Fiat Chrysler spokesman Mike Palese. WBENC was founded in 1997 and is the largest third-party certifier of businesses owned, controlled and operated by women in the U.S.

"FCA US is committed to creating a diverse and sustainable supply base that directly reflects our customers," said Tom Finelli, vice president, NAFTA Purchasing and Supplier Quality, Fiat Chrysler. "Supporting members of organizations like WBENC enables FCA US to operate efficiently, while bringing innovative new products to market that resonate with a diverse customer base. These programs also ensure that the economic benefits of our business are shared with members of our communities."

Fiat Chrysler was honored at the WBENC "Summit & Salute" to Women's Business Enterprises on March 23, in Phoenix, Palese said. The company was among 62 organizations that met the rigorous standards to be recognized as one of America's Top Corporations for Women's Business Enterprises. This elite group spent more than \$34 billion in this area in 2014.

"We are so proud of WBENC's Top Corporations, including FCA US, for choosing to set the standard for access and increase opportunities to women suppliers

in new markets – both domestically and internationally," said Pamela Prince-Eason, President and CEO of WBENC. "WBENC-certified WBEs in turn are able to fuel innovation and empower communities through economic growth and job creation."

Palese said Fiat Chrysler supplier diversity goals require that 8.5 percent of a Tier 1 supplier's procurement buy be sourced to certified minority suppliers. The goal for women-owned suppliers is 3 percent. Fiat Chrysler itself spent \$2.9 billion with approximately 215 minority and women-owned suppliers in 2015, representing 8 percent of the company's total annual purchasing. Since 1983, the company has purchased nearly \$53 billion from minority-owned, women-owned and veteran-owned suppliers.

Fiat Chrysler continues to support several organizations that assist Tier I suppliers with achieving their minority-owned and women-owned sourcing goals, Palese said. In addition to WBENC, these organizations include the National Minority Supplier Development Council and the Canadian Aboriginal Minority Supplier Council, WBE Canada and WEConnect International. FCA US also supports veteran-business ownership through membership with the National Veteran-Owned Business Association.

WBENC, a national 501(c)3 non-profit, partners with 14 Regional Partner Organizations to provide certification to women-owned businesses throughout the country. Outside of the U.S., certification is provided by WBENC's alliance partner, WEConnect International, Palese said.

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2017 Sonic Designed for New, Young Buyers

Just in time for the New York Auto Show Chevrolet has introduced the 2017 Sonic.

It's meant to be a more expressive, sporty take on the brand's fun-to-drive small car, said Steve Majoros, director of marketing, Chevrolet Cars and Crossovers. It offers big technologies such as a new MyLink system with segment-exclusive Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility, and a fresh exterior with new LED signature lighting.

The updated styling complements new comfort and convenience features such as an available heated steering wheel and a standard 7-inch-diagonal color touchscreen for the new MyLink system, Majoros said. Rear Park Assist is also new, adding to one of the most comprehensive safety packages in the segment.

"The new styling and features of the 2017 Sonic reinforce its position as a fun, efficient small car with leading technology - all at an affordable price," said Majoros. "This is an important segment for Chevrolet, as we really have an opportunity to introduce ourselves to new buyers and show them what we're all about."

Like the new Trax, Majoros said the Sonic is designed to bring new, younger customers to the brand, with more than 20 percent of them younger than 35 - and nearly 30 percent trading in non-GM vehicles. It is also Chevrolet's top vehicle for first-time new buyers.

The 2017 Sonic goes on sale this fall, offered in LS, LT and Premier trims on sedan models, said GM spokeswoman Courtney Moats. The hatchback returns exclusively in RS guise, offered in LT and Premier trims. An RS package is also available on the sedan.

Sonic's exterior has an entirely new, "expressive" look, Moats

said, echoing the global Chevrolet cues seen on vehicles such as the Cruze, Bolt EV and 2017 Trax.

"It is a richer, more detailed design, with the front end featuring a new hood, new front fascia and new lighting elements," said Justin Thompson, exterior design manager. "Projector-beam headlamps are standard, along with available LED daytime running lamps. Likewise, the rear fascia is new."

"With its trademark wheels-at-the-corners stance, the dramatic

changes to the Sonic's design give it and even sportier stance and attitude."

Sonic's interior retains its focus on delivering comfort, convenience and technology. A new, detailed gauge cluster incorporating an analog speedometer adds a higher degree of refinement to the cabin, complementing addition new comfort and convenience features.

For 2017, Sonic becomes the first in its segment to offer a power driver's seat.



2017 Chevrolet Sonic

Green Vehicles Offer More Options to Today's Buyers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Auto Show this week, Hyundai will join Toyota in showing off new electric and hybrid vehicles. Hyundai will unveil battery, gas-electric hybrid and plug-in versions of a new car called the Ioniq, while Toyota will show a plug-in Prius that can run on electricity alone, as well as both gas and electricity. The new Prius has an increased battery range.

The Prius hybrid, powered by both gas and electric motors, started the alternative fuel movement in the U.S. in 2000. Toyota deliberately made it look different than other cars, knowing that buyers wanted to make a statement about being environmentally friendly. Other companies set their green cars apart as well.

Even though sales grew as manufacturers added models, they never really caught on, partly because of the improved fuel economy of gas-powered vehicles. At their peak in 2013, with gas averaging \$3.50 per gallon, Americans bought only 341,000 hybrids and electrics, about 2.2 percent of total U.S. car sales, according to Kelley Blue Book.

Many companies spent millions developing the cars, taking losses to meet government fuel economy standards that will gradually increase and require the new-car fleet to average 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025.

As gas prices fell below \$2 per gallon, sales of hybrids and electrics dropped further. Last year, automakers had 16 hybrid and electric models on sale, but sales sank to just over 274,000.

All of this makes for a bad environment to roll out more hybrids and electrics. But automakers will press on, now trying to sell them on style, acceleration, handling and reliability.

"It looks better. It drives better. People can have more fun behind the wheel, but it still has new technologies and safety in it, and it also gets the benefits of a hybrid," Bill Fay, Toyota's U.S. general manager, said of the Prius.

As a power source, electricity outpaces gasoline in just about every area, says Karl Brauer, senior auto analyst for Kelley Blue Book. Advancements have made batteries smaller, increased their storage capacity and brought their prices down. Electric motors can take off faster than gas engines, and hybrids can power wheels with both electric and gas mo-

tors for better acceleration. Electrics also are far quieter. And with fewer moving parts, they're more reliable, he said.

Yet at \$2 per gallon, it would take more than 10 years to recoup the \$3,720 price difference between a base model Toyota Camry hybrid and its four-cylinder gas-engine counterpart. But that's not always a fair comparison, said Stephanie Brinley, senior analyst for IHS Automotive. Hybrids often come with more equipment and are comparable to better-equipped, pricier models, she said.

The coming debuts of the Chevrolet Bolt and Tesla Model 3, which will have 200 miles of electric range, should make battery electric vehicles more appealing, even with cheap gas, Brauer said. A lack of charging stations, once thought to limit adoption of electrics, becomes almost moot because of the longer range, he said.

Self-driving cars, which would use electric motors that can be recharged without humans, also would boost sales.

Brauer thinks electrics and hybrids will make up more than half of U.S. sales in the next 12 years as SUVs and trucks get the new systems. Hyundai's O'Brien thinks the shift will happen sooner.

Any spike in gas prices will only help. The International Energy Agency last month predicted that oil prices will more than double by 2020 because drillers are cutting investments due to current low prices, which will eventually reduce supply.

But even with cheap oil, Mick Roberts, a 46-year-old hydrogen engineer from Lowell, Indiana, bought a 2015 Chevrolet Volt hybrid in October when gas was \$2.20. He got a good deal on an outgoing model, but Roberts says he likes the smooth-shifting, quiet motor and quick acceleration. "It would be tough to go back to gas," he said.

Still, the automakers know it will take a lot of marketing to get mass adoption.

Toyota's Fay says there will be more chapters in the Prius police chase ad series, including one for the new plug-in. "The early adopters understand the differences in the technology," he said. "But with the mainstream customers, we all still have a ways to go to explain the benefits."

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Anderson works with Buick to share tips for getting summer ready.

Buick Gets 'Fit' for Summer

Buick is collaborating with fitness expert Tracy Anderson to celebrate the new Buick Cascada, the brand's luxury convertible.

The two have produced an exclusive video guide with tips on achieving a summer state of mind behind the wheel of a Buick, said GM spokeswoman Crystal Wilson.

Creator of the wildly successful Tracy Anderson Method, Anderson trains some of the world's biggest stars, including Gwyneth Paltrow and Jennifer Lopez, Wilson said. Her wellness tips for Buick will cover five key areas of summer – Skin, Songs, Sweat, Style and Snacks.

"The road to getting fit and healthy for summer starts by taking the right lifestyle steps now," said Anderson. "The tips Buick and I have developed are so easy to follow, and we hope they will inspire people to take better care of themselves this summer – and beyond."

"There's a cultural movement around taking better care of ourselves in both mind and body," said Molly Peck, director of Buick Marketing. "Working with Tracy Anderson to create the videos celebrates Buick's values of vitality and well-being."

Here's how Buick, Wilson said,

is preparing for summer using Tracy's five key areas of summer:

- **Skin:** Just as your body needs sunscreen to block harmful UV rays, Buick has designed the new 2016 Buick Cascada convertible with leather-appointed seats with UV-reflective materials for sunny days of top-down driving.
- **Songs:** The Buick Enclave offers 4G LTE connectivity, the most current and fastest mobile data network, giving passengers the option to connect and download their favorite tunes on the way to the beach or the gym.
- **Sweat:** Similar to the recommendation of walking 10,000 steps a day to enhance your quality of life, Buick engineers tested various features on the all-new Buick Envision 10,000 times to ensure the vehicle stands up to daily wear-and-tear for its entire life.
- **Style:** The Buick Encore provides a compact riding experience designed with flexible interior seating and rooftop rails that accommodate bikes or kayaks for plenty of outdoor adventures.
- **Snacks:** With the help of thinner, yet stronger, press-hardened materials used in the structure, the all-new 2017 Buick LaCrosse has dropped nearly 300 pounds from previous models.

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*All applicable rebates including lease/conquest offers have been deducted from sale price/payment. Pictures may not represent actual vehicle. Prices subject to change per GM incentives. Prices and payments are inclusive of active GM Employee Discount (Unless otherwise stated). Equinox, Malibu, Trax, Traverse, Silverado, and Camaro are 24 month leases. Volt and Impala are 36 month leases. All leases are 10k miles per year w/ approved S Tier credit w/ \$999 due at signing. Prices & payments are plus tax, title, and plate fees with acquisition fee up front. Deposition Fee may be required at vehicle turn in. Refundable security deposit required on certain vehicles - to be determined by lender. **\$3500 trade-in is valid on 2003 or newer vehicles with under 115k miles in drivable condition, no branded titles, less reconditioning determined by appraiser. Certain restrictions may apply, see dealer for complete details. ** Expiration Date - 3/31/16.

Detroit 3 Snag Top Honors in 'Brand Image'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

done and to give its trucks excellent fuel economy."

GMC earned its award, Kelley editors wrote, because they "credit the GMC brand's wildly successful Denali line of vehicles as the MVP in this win. While the truck- and SUV-only brand remains strongly associated with getting the job done, the GMC Sierra Denali truck and GMC Terrain, Acadia and Yukon Denali SUVs are all distinguished by boldly luxurious styling enhancements and elevated feature sets that add more than a measure of luxury to the mix. Almost its own sub-brand, the Denali lineup also creates a halo effect within which the entire GMC lineup shines brighter."

"Premium quality and exterior styling are the top two reasons customers choose GMC vehicles," said Duncan Aldred, vice president of GMC. "Unprecedented refinement and attention to detail provide our customers with a truly Professional Grade experience."

Kelley editors also had praise for the Buick brand, writing "the Buick brand's cars and SUVs become more modern and more luxurious with every new generation, which in turn makes the brand more appealing and a more impressive value. Even better, there are two Buicks, one small SUV and one small sedan, with starting prices under \$25,000. Yet the brand successfully stays focused on making cars that are quiet, comfortable, stylish and available with today's most popular connectivity and safety technology."

Plans for the Old Ypsilanti Site Continue Apace

LANSING, Mich. (AP) - A defunct General Motors plant in Ypsilanti Township that once pumped out World War II-era bombers is on track to become an autonomous car testing facility after a state board unanimously approved a nearly \$3 million grant to get the project started.

The Michigan Strategic Fund board approved the first grant March 22. The center will request another \$17 million in state aid for the project, but officials said it's unclear when that will happen.

Eric Shreffler of the Michigan Economic Development Corp. said the money is for initial legal work relating to the old GM plant's environmental history and other consulting they'll do before acquiring the property for the American Center for Mobility to develop the test facility.

The group seeks \$79 million total for the project, which would include federal funds. Shreffler says some private investors are interested but couldn't say who or for how much at this point.

John Maddox, CEO of the American Center for Mobility, said he's in contact with federal officials who may authorize some of the remaining \$59 million they're seeking to complete the project. Maddox is a former official for the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Maddox said the project doesn't yet have a firm timeline, but the first step is preliminary legal work and negotiating the land price.

"This technology can completely revolutionize the way we move people and goods," Maddox told board members March 22. He later added that it was "a blank slate and an incredible opportunity."