

‘Our Job Is to Bring the Designers’ Vision To Life...’ – GM Sculptor Mark Dybis

Making a well-designed car that is attractive and functional is as much art as science.

The collaborative energy inside the Buick design studio shows how proven artistic methods and cutting-edge technology work together to create beautiful vehicles, said Buick spokesman Stuart Fowle.

Interior designers of the award-winning Buick Avista were tasked with creating an interior of equal beauty to the exterior,

Fowle said. While sketching and refining the door in digital mock-ups they reached the point where they wanted to see it in physical form. They gave the detailed sketch to the clay sculptors and left the next step in their hands. For a designer, the transition from 2D to 3D is the moment of truth.

“We are really fortunate to work with such a talented team of sculptors,” said Aaron Stich, creative designer for Buick.

“They brought the design to life in a way we never could have imagined; it was absolutely inspiring to see how they interpreted what we had done with pen and paper. This is what it’s like in the Buick studio right now, there’s so much energy, and everyone is itching to contribute. It’s fueling the creative renaissance of the brand.”

Mark Dybis, creative sculptor,



Mark Dybis working at Buick's design studio.

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New Camaro Most Advanced One Ever

Who says Detroit can't make a great sports car? Not GM.

The 2017 Camaro ZL1 is poised to challenge the most advanced sports coupes in the world in any measure – with unprecedented levels of technology, refinement, track capability and straight-line acceleration, said Mark Reuss, executive vice president of Global Product Development.

“The Camaro ZL1 is designed to excel at everything,” said Reuss “It’s a 2+2 coupe offering incredible performance – acceleration, handling and braking – with the highest levels of technology and perfect chassis damping, making it suitable for

everyday driving. It will compare well to any sports coupe, at any price and in any setting.”

Acceleration for the ZL1 is delivered with a new supercharged 6.2L V8 engine estimated at 640 hp, Reuss said, and either a six-speed manual transmission with active rev matching or an all-new 10-speed automatic. Handling capability starts with the lightweight, stiffer structure of the all-new sixth-Gen Camaro, married with Magnetic Ride suspension and an electronic limited-slip differential. Standard technologies include Driver Mode Selector, dual-mode exhaust and advanced connectivity features.

The Camaro ZL1 goes on sale late this year, said Chevrolet spokesman Monte Doran.

Functionality defines the Camaro ZL1's form, with the exterior shaped during more than 100 hours of wind-tunnel testing and on-track validation to improve aerodynamics and cooling for track use, Reuss said. Accordingly, its exterior elements all play a part in managing airflow over, under and through the ZL1.

“The design supports the Camaro ZL1's exceptional performance and does so with compelling style,” said John Mack,

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The 2017 Camaro ZL1

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



2015 Buick Encore



2015 F-150



2015 Chrysler 300

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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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AAA Reports Gas Prices Have Slight Increase

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP) – AAA Michigan says gas prices statewide have increased by about 5 cents a gallon in the past week.

The Dearborn-based auto club says the average price for self-serve regular unleaded gasoline was about \$2.02 per gallon as of Sunday, March 20. That's about 42 cents less than it was at the same point last year.

It's the sixth consecutive week that statewide average daily gas prices have increased. AAA Michigan says it's the first time since November that the statewide average daily price has been over \$2 per gallon.

The lowest average price was about \$1.98 per gallon in the Ann Arbor and Detroit areas, while the highest average was about \$2.07 per gallon in the Marquette area.

AAA Michigan surveys daily fuel prices at 2,800 gas stations across the state to determine average prices.

Library Exploring Stars in April

EMU Professor Jesse Mason will show and discuss the latest images from the Hubble Space Telescope. This lecture will be held Monday, April 4, 2106 at 6:30 pm in the Civic Center Conference Room, said Warren librarian Jennifer Lund.

"Hubble's orbit outside the distortion of Earth's atmosphere allows it to take extremely high resolution images with negligible background light," Lund said. "Weather permitting, we will then go outside to look at space from some telescopes set up outside the Warren library. Teens and adults are welcome."

Lund said that space for this event is limited, so to guarantee a spot, people should call the Warren public library at 586-574-4564 to reserve a space at Prof. Mason's lecture.

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'Our Job Is to Bring the Designers' Vision to Life...' Dybis

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remembers his initial reaction when seeing the drawing of the door and quips that it reminded him of an M.C. Escher artwork. Dybis, who has spent the majority of his decade long career as an automotive sculptor in the Buick studios explained the lofty nature of making this proposed door design work.

"It was an amazing door design, but it was longer than we're used to, so we knew we'd have to pay special attention to the

curved lines to make the physical model look just as graceful as it did on the paper," Dybis explains. "Our job is to bring the designers' vision to life, and we know there are things that have to be considered when transitioning a drawing into the tangible world. In the end, I appreciate that a modern-looking car like the Avista, and all Buicks, are styled with time-honored methods like hand drawing and sculpting."

In developing a vehicle, designers use a variety of tools to

achieve the perfect blend of form and function. While every new Buick begins as a sketch, refining the design entails a range of methods to achieve a specific advantage or desired aesthetic, Stich said.

For example, clay sculpting by hand is unrivaled for the level of artistry and sophistication it brings to the surface detail while holograms and other digital 3D representations can help when considering how light reflects or how a car might look in different environments.

"Concept cars stretch the imagination and inspire the direction our production portfolio is heading," said Stich. "This door is just one example of how everyone in the Buick design studio is jumping at the chance to create designs that will stand the test of time and be more beautiful than the last."

That's how the collaborative process works – every iteration is an opportunity to outdo the one before it and create something so pleasing to the eye you can't help but be amazed."



Buick Avista concept



Buick Avista's concept side rear angle.

Past GM, Toyota Legal Woes Hint at Volkswagen's Future

by SUDHIN THANAWALA
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) – Hundreds of millions of dollars in settlements and fines over unintended acceleration in Toyotas and faulty ignition switches in General Motors' vehicles provide a glimpse of what consumers and the government might get from VW for cheating on diesel emissions, legal scholars say.

But even with a fix, the company still faces lawsuits by angry Volkswagen owners and the Department of Justice.

The owners were duped into buying the vehicles with promises that they were high-performing and fuel efficient yet still environmentally friendly, attorneys for hundreds of owners said in a consolidated complaint filed in February. The suit seeks class action status on behalf of all owners of affected vehicles across the country and demands that Volkswagen buy the vehicles back.

GM paid nearly \$600 million to settle more than 350 claims that its ignition switch defect led to crashes. The defect caused 124 deaths and 275 injuries as of August 2015, according to attorney Kenneth Feinberg, who administered claims against GM.

If there is no way to fix Volkswagen vehicles, the court may require the company to refund owners the difference between what they were told they were buying and what they received, said Gregory Keating, a University of Southern California law professor who specializes in consumer fraud cases.

But experts say the Volkswagen litigation is different from the Toyota and GM cases in that Volkswagen's fraud is clearer and more egregious.

But the Volkswagen case comes with a wild card that could significantly drive up damages: The company's admission in September that it intentionally defeated emissions tests and put dirty vehicles on the road.

"It was fraudulent deception, and that makes the case susceptible to a very substantial punitive damage award," said Robert Rabin, a professor at Stanford Law School and expert in product defect cases.

A more immediate concern for Volkswagen may be how to bring nearly 600,000 diesel cars polluting U.S. roads into compliance with emissions standards.

A federal judge last month gave the company until Thursday to report back on whether it has come up with an engineering fix. "It seems to me six months is long enough to determine whether or not there is an engineering process that can be utilized by Volkswagen and would be acceptable to the United States government," Senior U.S. District Court Judge Charles Breyer said.

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GM's Dan Ammann (center) with Lyft Inc. co-founders John Zimmer (right) and Logan Green (left).

GM 'Lyfts' Off with Platform Partnership

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."

To learn more about GM's initiatives in the personal mobility space, visit: media.gm.com, Bluhm said.

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

New Camaro Enjoys Most Tech in Model's History

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Camaro exterior design manager. "From every angle, the elements coalesce to give the car a purposeful, super aggressive attitude."

The lower grille opening, for example, offers greater airflow compared to the Camaro SS, Mack said, and the upper grille incorporates a new version of the "flow-tie" open bowtie insignia. There's also a new hood, with a carbon fiber insert and heat extractor that pulls hot air from the engine compartment. Additional changes include a larger front splitter, unique rockers, a wing-style rear spoiler and wider front fenders – all tuned to improve aerodynamics for greater high-speed stability.

Inside, there are standard Recaro front seats, along with a suede flat-bottom steering wheel and shift knob. Chevy's Performance Data Recorder is available.

A cohesive suite of performance technologies tailors ZL1's performance for street and track. Features include an updated Magnetic Ride suspension, Performance Traction Management, electronic limited-slip differential, Custom Launch Control and Driver Mode Selector, Doran said. It also has a stronger power-to-weight ratio than its predecessor, weighing 200 pounds

less, while offering approximately 60 more horsepower and 80 more pound-feet of torque.

The result is a one-of-a-kind driving experience, Reuss said.

"Driving the Camaro ZL1 is best described as 'fast with finesse,'" said Reuss. "It is beautifully balanced, with perfect damping and isolation for optimal performance and driver confidence in virtually any situation."

Additional chassis features include:

- Unique 20-inch forged aluminum wheels with 285/30ZR20 front and 305/30ZR20 rear tires.
- Goodyear Eagle F1 Supercar tires with a compound and construction developed exclusively for the Camaro to offer exceptional grip on the track.
- Brembo brakes with six-piston monobloc front calipers – featuring the ZL1 logo – and massive, 15.35-inch two-piece front rotors.

Underhood, the ZL1 features a supercharged LT4 6.2L V8 Small Block engine, with intake and exhaust systems tailored for Camaro. It is rated at an estimated 640 horsepower and 640 lb-ft of torque, Doran said. The LT4 is backed by a standard six-speed manual transmission or all-new, available paddle-shift 10-speed automatic. The 10-speed automatic has 7.39 overall ratio for smaller steps between gears.

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2016 Malibu Hybrid Hits 47 MPG with Latest Technology

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, 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 connec-

tivity, 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. Additional active safety features offered 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 en-

gine 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 engine 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.



2016 Chevrolet Malibu Hybrid

Ford Talks at National Green Conference

Ford Motor Company provided a briefing on March 22 at a forum of the G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency in Washington, D.C.

The briefing highlighted its Partnership for A Cleaner Environment. PACE is a program that aims to help the company's suppliers minimize their impact on the environment by sharing details of Ford's best practices for water, energy and carbon dioxide reduction, said Ford spokesman John Cangany.

"We are committed to expanding our stewardship with our global suppliers to help minimize our environmental impact more

broadly," said Hau Thai-Tang, Ford group vice president, global purchasing. "By sharing our practices and our processes at the G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency workshop, we hope to foster innovation and collaboration to address sustainability-related issues and advance environmental responsibility."

The G7 Alliance brings together the nations of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and United States to improve health, empower women and promote climate protection. The G7 Alliance on Resource Efficiency workshop serves as a forum for participants to share best practices and innovations with businesses.

Ford has long been committed to reducing its impact on the environment, and its efforts have yielded proven results, Cangany said. Far more than an environmental concern, Ford views commodities such as water as a basic right for people everywhere – a resource that should be clean, affordable and accessible.

In 2000, for example, Cangany said Ford began setting year-over-year reduction targets with a global manufacturing goal of reducing water use per vehicle by 30 percent by 2015 using a 2009 baseline. Ford met its goal two years ahead of schedule and is now setting new long-term targets. The company's water strategy aligns with the United Nations CEO Water Mandate – a private-public initiative launched by

the secretary general of the organization in 2007 committing to a water management strategy and to publicly reporting on its progress annually.

Ford began testing PACE in 2014, Cangany said, and has expanded the program to include a total of 25 strategic suppliers representing 800 manufacturing sites in 41 countries. The automaker is transparent in sharing its best practices, and works to make tracking success easy by offering statistical analysis to help participants monitor progress toward goals. In return, suppliers share their environmental data and their best practices with Ford.

"By implementing select best practices from Ford, Lear expects to realize cost savings at its facilities worldwide," said Doug Andrews, Lear environmental sustainability manager. "But the true impact will be Lear's contribution to helping protect the environment, because at the end of the day Ford's PACE program is not just about sustaining its business, but about doing the right thing."

Ford was recently named to the 2016 Ethisphere Institute list of World's Most Ethical Companies for the seventh consecutive year, Cangany said. The award recognizes the world's top companies for mandating ethical practices and promoting corporate citizenship. Ford is the only automaker to earn the distinction.

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.

Rosie the Riveters Women Honored

WASHINGTON (AP) – Seven decades after their "we can do it" attitude proved invaluable to the Allied victory, about 30 "Rosie the Riveters" were honored March 22 with a trip to Washington that included visits to the National World War II Memorial.

Wearing honor flight red cardigans, the women – now in their 80s and 90s – whose work helped the war effort posed for group photos with the U.S. Capitol as a backdrop, had lunch at a Library of Congress building and visited Arlington National Cemetery.

At every stop, people approached them, shook their hands, and said, "Thank you."

"They have those signs: 'We can do it.' They should say: 'We did it,'" said Helen Kushnir of Dearborn, part of the March 22 group, which traveled from Michigan.

As women worked during the war at jobs traditionally done by men, such as churning out bombers at Ford Motor Co.'s Willow Run plant in Michigan, one of them was the inspiration for the Rosie character that came to symbolize female empowerment and the "we're-in-this-together" spirit of the American homefront.

"You incredible women are such an inspiration," U.S. Rep. Debbie Dingell of Michigan told the women during the luncheon. "You opened the doors wider for (women)," said Dingell, who co-hosted the event with fellow Michigan U.S. Rep. Candice Miller.

When the four-bus convoy ferrying the women around town arrived at the WWII Memorial, they were met by throngs of supporters, drawing cheers and applause.



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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:** Ford 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 I 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.

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.

A silver Chevrolet Spark hatchback is shown from a front-three-quarter view. The car is parked on a light-colored surface in front of a modern building with large glass windows. The sky is overcast. The car features alloy wheels and a black roof rack.

Green Vehicles Offer More Options to Today's Buyers

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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 prices down. Electric motors can take off faster than gas engines, and hybrids can power wheels with both electric and gas mo-

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

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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."



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

Buick Gets 'Fit' for Summer

Here's how Buick, Wilson said,

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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."