

Bottles Are Turned into Noise Reducers

Sometimes an idea is too good to keep bottled up.

General Motors is turning its employees' recycled water bottles into a new life: noise-reducing fabric insulation that covers the Chevrolet Equinox engine.

The bottles – collected from five of its Michigan facilities – are also being turned into air filtration components and insulation in coats for the homeless community, said GM spokeswoman Becky Price.

Given its drive to zero waste, all of GM's global facilities recycle their water bottles. However, the bottles collected at the five locations are now funneled into its "Do Your Part" project, where 11 businesses collaborate to give them a second life, Price said.

The air filtration components are used in GM facilities to protect air quality; and the insulation goes into Empowerment Plan coats that transform into sleeping bags.

"Recycling is good, but viewing waste as a valuable resource that can be plugged into your operations or products is even better," said John Bradburn, GM global manager of waste reduction. "It's about rethinking the process and finding more sustainable ways to manufacture products and contribute to our communities."

GM pursued this project after analyzing its impacts from a holistic business case:

- Sourcing recycled material costs the same while saving energy and reducing waste.
- Engaging a network of companies to process the material in North America strengthens the economy.
- Donating 24,000 yards of insulation – enough to make 6,500 coats – helps the homeless.

"Many of today's businesses are challenging the take-make-dispose model and seeing the benefits of a more circular economy," said Andrew Mangan, executive director of the U.S. Business Council for Sustainable Development. "From closed-loop recycling to helping launch material reuse networks, GM is thinking differently and getting other companies to join in."

Price said that GM is demonstrating how a supply chain can become a supply web where business opportunities stem from an original project, furthering the mission and driving more social and economic impact.

Each partner engaged in this initiative brings specific capabilities, Price said. Hamtramck Recy-

cling bails the plastic bottles collected from GM's world headquarters at the Renaissance Center, Warren Technical Center, and Orion Assembly, Flint Tool and Die, and Flint Engine plants. Clean Tech Inc. washes the bottles and converts them to flake. Unifi, Inc. recycles the bottle flake into resin. Palmetto Synthetics processes the resin to create fibers and William T. Burnett & Co. processes the fibers into various forms of fleece, serv-

ing all three applications.

Price said Rogers Foam Corp. die cuts the fleece and EXO-s attaches it into the nylon cover for the Chevrolet Equinox V6 engine. The part helps further dampen engine noise to deliver a quiet ride.

Filtration Services Group works with New Life Center, a nonprofit jobs development and training mission in Flint, to make

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John Bradburn with Equinox engine's used water bottle insulation



Tom Connolly and Jeremy Posey with a 2017 hybrid Pacifica

New Hybrid Pacifica Minivan On Display at SAE Congress

Attendees of the Society of Automotive Engineers World Congress in Detroit last week had the opportunity to see the hybrid Chrysler Pacifica – the first minivan in the world to be a hybrid.

Tom Connolly, the Project Responsible man for the Pacifica hybrid chassis said building it was more than a matter of slapping a hybrid engine into the regular Pacifica platform.

"The hybrid Pacifica required an all-new platform," Connolly said. "This is the first hybrid in the minivan category and it's Fiat Chrysler's first hybrid. The new platform was needed because it

has a dual motor system and transmission."

This dual motor system and transmission makes the vehicle heavier and takes up more space than a standard engine and transmission, Connolly said.

That means that the vehicle's suspension had to be retuned and the shocks needed to be stronger.

"The steering calibration is also different as a result of the extra weight," Connolly said. "One thing we were able to do was place the batteries in the

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Automakers Need to Watch Out for Exploiters of New Tech

by Jim Stickford

The Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) holds its annual world congress in Detroit at Cobo Center last week. And it might surprise some to learn that one of the guest speakers was a lawyer from the U.S. Department of Justice.

John P. Carlin, assistant attorney general for the National Security Department of Justice, spoke about how auto manufacturers need to protect themselves from a new kind of threat.

"I am here today because the auto industry is on the cusp of great technological changes," Carlin said. "If we look at other industries that have gone through similar upheavals, we will see that rogue nations and non-state actors who have sought to hurt us will seek to exploit the new technologies that are being introduced to the auto industry."

"By the year 2020, millions of

automobiles will be interconnected, thanks to the latest computer technology in cars."

And, Carlin said, it's vital that both government and industry get ahead of the curve. Before 9/11, a successful victory over terrorism was considered a conviction of the perpetrators after the fact. Now, Carlin said, we can't afford to wait for terrorism to happen before taking action.

Pre-9/11, different government agencies had different agendas and didn't work well together, he said, adding, that changed.

Another thing that has changed, Carlin said, has been the creation of social media. Now it's possible for terrorist recruiters to establish relationships with people they never have to meet.

That's the power of the Internet – the ability to connect.

And it's this ability to connect that makes companies vulnerable, Carlin said. Companies are having proprietary information



John Carlin speaks to engineers at the recent SAE World Congress.

stolen, he said. "Just look at Sony," he said. "The Justice Department was able to prove that North Korea was responsible for the leaks that embarrassed the company in 2014."

China, he said, employs hackers to steal information from pri-

vate companies, including research and information on bids.

Carlin said it's a fairly common practice for hackers to steal proprietary information from a company, something like information

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Rendering of the future Ford Research and Engineering Center with 4.5 million square feet of work space

Ford's Dearborn Facilities To Get Major Transformation

A new kind of Ford Motor Company evidently requires a new kind of campus to house it.

Ford plans to transform its Dearborn facilities into a modern, green and high-tech campus to "foster innovation and help drive the company's transition to an auto and a mobility company," said Ford Executive Chairman Bill Ford at the plan's unveiling April 12.

The 10-year transformation of the company's more-than-60-year-old Dearborn facilities will

place 30,000 employees from 70 buildings today into primarily two locations – a product campus and a world headquarters campus, said Ford spokeswoman Becky Sanch.

More than 7.5 million square feet of work space will be rebuilt and upgraded into even more technology-enabled and connected facilities.

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Security Matters, Says Lawyer at SAE Congress

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on customers, and then say, “pay me \$500 on Bitcoin or I’ll release the information to the public.”

Most of the time, Carlin said, it’s easier for the companies to pay off the hacker. But recently, one national company received such a threat and reported it to the government. Officials traced the threat and learned a person associated with known terrorist groups was behind the threat.

It was actually a backdoor attempt to obtain and release information on American agents. Once private information was learned, the hacker would then encourage followers via social media to kill the agents.

The U.S. government was able to foil the plan. The hacker was arrested and the head of the group he reported to is no longer alive.

Security is something that automobile manufacturers will have to think of in advance. Carlin said when many companies get hacked, it is through third-party vendors whose security wasn’t as strong as it could be. Hackers penetrated the third-party vendors and when these vendors were given access to the main company, security was compromised.

“There is no wall high enough to keep hackers out who are working for determined nation states,” Carlin said. “To fight this will require great cooperation between business and government.”

And, Carlin said, automakers need to build in upfront defenses against having a vehicle’s systems being hacked. It’s something that has to be done from the very beginning of the design process.

Jay Leno Praises GM Designer Ed Welburn’s Long Career

by Jim Stickford

GM’s retiring head of design Ed Welburn is someone whose work has had an impact on many people – just ask Jay Leno.

The retired host of “The Tonight Show” currently has a show on CNBC about cars called “Jay Leno’s Garage,” which has featured Welburn as a guest on several occasions because Leno is a fan of his work. He has gotten to know Welburn over the years.

“What’s really cool about Ed’s story is that it’s a classic American success story,” Leno said. “His dad worked for General Motors and Ed’s a real car guy. I’ve seen pictures of him as a child sitting behind the wheel of GM cars.

“What’s really interesting is that Ed’s never had another job. He joined GM 44 years ago and it’s been his only job ever. He was never a waiter in school or anything like that. He joined GM and stayed there. Who can say that in this day and age?”

Leno also praised Welburn as “a true gentleman and class act” who inspired his employees not through being an intimidating boss, but rather by laying out his vision and “seducing” people into agreeing with his designs.

“It’s also important to remember that Ed was GM’s first design chief for the whole world,” Leno said. “Before him, you might have a design chief for North America, one for Europe. It’s exciting to me that the world design chief is not some accountant but a real car guy.

“When I was 20, Cadillac was known for its big cars. Now, young people think of them in the same breath as BMW and Mercedes. The CT3, under the hood, is as good as any European car in the market.”

And Welburn’s contribution to GM and the auto industry goes

beyond updating Cadillac designs so that they appeal to a younger demographic, Leno said. “Look at the Volt,” Leno said. “It’s one of Ed’s designs. On my show, three of my crew members have bought a Volt. I also have a Volt. I fill it up about once a year and want to see how long I can get without having to put more gas in the car.

“Sometimes I go seven or eight months and then the gas goes bad. I’ve owned my Volt for six years and I think I’ve filled it up six or seven times. That’s amazing. It’s fun to see GM do well.”

Part of being a real car guy, Leno said, is knowing the heritage of the industry, and Welburn passes that test.

“Ed is very familiar with GM’s heritage,” Leno said. “No one is better when it comes to knowledge of the brand. He’s a walking encyclopedia.”

Leno added that Ed is leaving when GM is doing very well in terms of design. It’s not just Cadillac. He is impressed with the Malibu, but admitted that

he’s not as familiar with GM’s less expensive products.

“Ed’s doing it right,” Leno said. “He’s leaving GM in a very strong position and design is in good shape for the next guy who takes over. But Ed’s not going away. He will still be active at GM as an adviser.”

Leno also thought that Welburn has done something interesting with his designs. They are appealing, not controversial.

“Look at something like the Viper,” Leno said. “People’s opinions are split down the middle about its designs. Half the people love it and half the people hate it. That gets publicity but does it help sales? Now look at Ed’s Cadillac designs. When they came out, people liked the angles and the sharp curves. Younger people like them. This is the generation that grew up with Transformers and Ed’s designs reminded them of that.

“What Ed did was make Cadillac bold and exciting. That’s saying something, being able to sell young people a brand that was

previously thought of as an old person’s car. That’s salesmanship.”

Leno is speaking as the owner of a Cadillac CTS-V with a manual transmission, not just a casual observer of the auto industry.

Leno also appreciates Welburn’s sense of humor, high praise from a comedian.

“A while back, I and all the other Volt owners in Southern California received an invitation to celebrate Volt owners who had put more than 10,000 electric miles on their cars,” Leno said.

“Ed awarded everyone with a sticker. I questioned that, so he went back and designed a truly beautiful plaque.”

“But that’s Ed. He’s someone who takes his work seriously, but doesn’t take himself seriously. He’s someone who is as comfortable in the board room as he is at a car show talking cars with people off the street.

“He’s the kind of designer who, on his days off, comes to my garage and talks cars. He can’t turn it off.”



Jay Leno and Ed Welburn talk about the Cadillac Elmiraj concept car on “Jay Leno’s Garage” show on CNBC.

Ford’s Dearborn Facilities Get Major Transformation

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ways, the product campus will include a new design center, autonomous vehicles, on-demand shuttles, eBikes, new onsite employee services, wireless connectivity speeds up to 10 times faster than today and more green spaces, Sanch said.

A second campus location – around the current Ford World Headquarters building – will feature a new Ford Credit facility, Sanch said, and provide onsite employee services, improved connectivity and enhanced ac-

cessibility to the expansive green space that surrounds the building.

“As we transition to an auto and a mobility company, we’re investing in our people and the tools they use to deliver our vision,” said Ford President and CEO Mark Fields.

“Bringing our teams together in an open, collaborative environment will make our employees’ lives better, speed decision-making and deliver results for both our core and emerging businesses.”

The company’s core auto business includes continuing to invest in designing, manufacturing, marketing, financing and servicing cars, SUVs, trucks and electrified vehicles, Fields said. It also 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.

Construction of the new product campus begins this month at the Ford Research and Engineering Center, Sanch said. The majority of work is expected to be complete by 2023. Major work on the second campus around Ford World Headquarters begins in 2021 and is expected to be complete in 2026.

The current Ford Research and Engineering Center Campus – dedicated by U.S. President Eisenhower in May 1953 – currently houses 12,000 employees, Sanch said. It is being transformed into a contemporary, innovative work environment to accommodate 24,000 employees in 4.5 million square feet of upgraded work space.

Key features will include:

- New connected facilities that will feature the latest wired and

wireless hardware designed to last many years;

- Work spaces that foster collaboration and spark innovation;
- A central green area that will link buildings with walking trails, bike paths and covered walkways;
- Energy-saving sustainable technologies, including geothermal heating and cooling, and
- Water-saving technologies, such as rainwater capture and automated metering.

The campus also will serve as a pilot location for Ford Smart Mobility solutions, Fields said, including autonomous vehicles, on-demand shuttles and eBikes to transport employees.

The all-new, more-than-700,000-square-foot Design Center will be the focal point of the campus and include new studios and an outdoor design courtyard. The historic 14,000-square-foot Ford Design Showroom will remain and will be upgraded to be used as an event venue.

The current Ford World Headquarters building was dedicated in 1956 and reflects thought-leading architecture of that time. When campus renovation begins in 2021, care will be taken to retain the iconic image of the building while providing both exterior and interior enhancements.

The new campus will include:

- More than 1.3 million square feet of reworked space;
- A new Ford Credit facility connected to World Headquarters, forming a more cohesive, employee-friendly campus;
- Improved connectivity, walkways, covered parking decks and outdoor recreation facilities, including softball and soccer fields;
- Enhanced green spaces with planted areas, native species and tree canopy, including the renew-

al of the Arjay Miller Arboretum started in 1960.

All employees in the World Headquarters campus, including senior executives, will have better technologically connected facilities and open work spaces, creating a collaborative environment.

In the near term, both Ford World Headquarters and Ford Credit facilities will receive updates to common areas, including a modern cafe at World Headquarters.

Ford’s commitment to sustainability and innovation will be integrated throughout the project, Fields said.

This includes a new Sustainability Showcase building on the product campus, which will produce more energy than it consumes.

Collaborative work areas will be a key design feature throughout the complex. Employees can expect more natural light in individual work spaces and more daily choice about where to work on particular tasks.

From sit/stand desks and private spaces to indoor and outdoor cafes with Wi-Fi, employees will have plenty of choice, including at least one conference and meeting space for every seven employees.

In addition, on-site fitness centers and more healthy dining options are planned.

“We are taking a holistic approach when integrating employee wellness into work environments,” said Donna Inch, chairman and CEO, Ford Motor Land Development Corporation.

“We realize people are our greatest asset, and we are putting them at the heart of our workplace design to create healthy, happy work environments.”



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2017 Fiat 124 Spider

Fiat 124 Spider, Mazda MX 5 Share DNA with a Difference

The 2017 Fiat 124 Spider is a truly international car. It's hitting the U.S. market in the summer of 2016 and represents a fusion of Japanese engineering and Italian design.

Back on May 23 of 2012, the *Associated Press* reported, "Mazda Motor Corp. and Fiat SpA are working together on developing and manufacturing a roadster, or two-seater convertible, although the automakers will come up with different, distinctly styled models."

"The deal with Fiat of Italy, which controls U.S. automaker Chrysler, serves as a perk for a money-losing Mazda, and highlights the Japanese automaker's trademark product – the best-selling roadster of all time."

"Both sides said in a release May 23 they had signed an agreement to work together, but each manufacturer will use its own engine and styling."

"They declined to give details, but said their cooperation on Fiat's Alpha Romeo model and Mazda model will be based on Mazda's 'next-generation MX-5 rear-wheel-drive architecture.'"

The vehicle resulting from this alliance is the Fiat 124 Spider. It is based on the Mazda ND platform.

The decision was made to collaborate with Mazda because of the company's proven track record for developing a best-in-class two-seat roadster, said Fiat Chrysler spokeswoman Angela Bianchi.

The 124 Spider will be manufactured by Mazda in its Hiroshima plant. Fiat was responsible for the design of the 124 Spider, which is powered by proprietary Fiat Chrysler engines, Bianchi said.

But despite being based on the Mazda platform, the Spider and the Mazda MX 5 are very different vehicles, said Bianchi.

"FCA and Mazda have developed two differentiated, distinctly styled, iconic and brand-specific lightweight roadsters featuring

ing rear-wheel drive," Bianchi said. "The 124 Spider is built on the MX-5 platform, however the 124 Spider has iconic Italian design, unique body-in-white, powertrains, interior components and materials and wheels."

"It also has unique calibrations of the suspension, springs, shocks and bars, and unique steering calibration, resulting in exceptional driving dynamics. Its Italian design is a product pillar of the 124 Spider, strongly inspired by the original but with a modern spin."

"In general, we do not discuss other manufacturers' vehicles, but we can emphasize the Fiat 124 Spider's key features. The new 124 Spider has higher horsepower and torque, is longer, and has a larger trunk. The 124 Spider also has a unique suspension calibration of springs, shocks and bars, providing a distinctive steering feel."

"The design of the new 124 has a unique balance of effortless style and performance in the great Italian tradition. The 124 Spider's longer length gives it a horizontal, stable and elegant appearance."

Fiat Chrysler Calibration engineer Jeremy Posey said, speaking strictly as someone who enjoys high-performance driving, he believes the MX 5 chassis is one of the most capable small-car chassis on the market today.

"Over the years," Posey said, "I've taken MX 5 chassis vehicles for a spin on track days and can say from firsthand experience that they perform very well and handle very well." But, he said, it's also his opinion that the MX 5 cars have been underpowered.

The Fiat Spider 124 takes care of that problem, Posey said. For that reason alone, the Mazda MX 5 and the Fiat 124 offer very different riding experiences for the driving enthusiast.

"This chassis with the Fiat powertrain in the 124 Spider has resulted in what I think is one fine car," Posey said.

Pacifica Shines at SAE World Congress

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minivan's stow-and-go compartment in the back of the vehicle."

Overall, Connolly said, it's fair to say that designing the hybrid Pacifica involved a lot more effort than just sticking its hybrid powertrain and battery pack inside a standard Pacifica. But the hard work has paid off. Chrysler has been able to build a minivan that can get 30 miles per charge. It can be charged using 220-volt chargers in about two hours.

"The thing is that we thought that minivans are used a lot for running errands around where people live," said Connolly.

"And if you have to drive more than 30 miles, then the secondary powertrain kicks in."

This powertrain, said Jeremy Posey, calibration engineer for Fiat Chrysler, is a gasoline engine that produces electricity to power the vehicle's electric engine. On very rare occasions, both minivan engines may power it.

But, Posey said, that's rare – usually when the minivan is climbing a very steep grade. In just about every other situation, the batteries power the main engine. And when they are depleted, the secondary engine, powered by gas, produces electricity that feeds the main engine.

Connolly said another thing engineers had to take into account was the noise produced by the electric engine.

"Electric engines are quiet," Connolly said. "Normal engine

noise – engine noise that people are used to – covers up all kinds of other noises produced by the minivan. But with an electric engine, those noises aren't masked and people think they're bad."

So, Connolly said, Fiat Chrysler engineers had to develop ways to isolate the undesirable noises from the passengers and driver, and that wasn't easy.

Posey said it was interesting talking to his fellow SAE members.

"This is the first hybrid minivan out there," Posey said. "SAE engineers know the difficulties associated with hybrids and plug-in hybrids."

"A lot of them have been stopping by wondering how we were able to it."

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GM Recycles Plastic Bottles

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the panels for the air filtration fleece, which is then sent to 10 GM facilities.

The coat insulation is sent to Carhartt, a workwear company established in Detroit in 1889, who cuts it to size for The Empowerment Plan.

General Motors also is working with various organizations such as Schupan Recycling in Flint to collect additional water bottles to plug into the project, Price said.

GM uses recycled content in many of its vehicles. Cardboard from various General Motors

plants is recycled into a sound-dampening material in the Buick Verano headliner; plastic caps and shipping aids from its Fort Wayne facility are mixed with other materials to make radiator shrouds for the Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra; and test tires from Milford Proving Ground are shredded and used in the manufacturing of air and water baffles for a variety of GM cars.

General Motors has 131 land-fill-free facilities around the world and recycles the equivalent of 38 million garbage bags of byproducts each and every year, Price said.

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Pacifica's New Ad Campaign Aimed At Today's Dads

The Chrysler brand officially debuted its new "Dad Brand" advertising campaign for the new 2017 Chrysler Pacifica on April 8 featuring actor/comedian/writer/producer Jim Gaffigan.

The multiplatform campaign features the real-life dad of five, leveraging various new 2017 Chrysler Pacifica features to improve his "Dad Brand" in a comedic, tongue-in-cheek fashion while highlighting the levels of functionality, versatility, technology and safety features of the vehicle.

"As the Chrysler brand is reinventing the minivan from the ground up, the objective of our campaign is to challenge the conventional category stereotypes and appeal to a new generation of minivan buyers, including younger families," said Olivier Francois, chief marketing officer, FCA - Global.

"To do that, authenticity is key, with real-life language and an endorser, Jim Gaffigan, who is a real father of five with a strong point-of-view on fatherhood and modern-day parenting. Here you see Jim and his family leveraging the customer benefits of our minivan to enhance his own 'Dad Brand' in a relatable and engaging series of sketches that highlight the class-leading features of the all-new 2017 Chrysler Pacifica."

"The Chrysler brand invented the minivan 33 years ago, creating an entirely new automotive category that uniquely addressed the needs of families," said Tim Kuniskis, head of Passenger Car Brands - Dodge, SRT, Chrysler and Fiat, FCA - North America.

"With Millennial families in mind, our 'Dad Brand' campaign with comedian Jim Gaffigan establishes that the all-new 2017 Chrysler Pacifica's unprecedented level of functionality, versatility, technology and exterior design again transforms the segment - adding 37 minivan firsts for an unprecedented total of 115 innovations - while instantly adding to your 'dad cred' with not only your children, but also within your neighborhood."

NBCUniversal, Fiat Chrysler Join Forces

NBCUniversal has entered into a wide-reaching partnership with Chrysler brand, Universal Pictures and Illumination Entertainment to launch the new 2017 Chrysler Pacifica and Illumination and Universal's "The Secret Life of Pets," which arrives in theaters July 8.

In a fully scaled effort, the multi-episode custom content pieces will feature NBCUniversal talent, including star "Late Night" host Seth Meyers and his dog, Frisbee, and will air across the company's networks and social platforms.

It will also air on BuzzFeed and Vox Media April 11 through July, and will be distributed across the web.

The custom content debuted on April 11 during NBC's "Today" and then across the NBCUniversal portfolio.

Content featuring the Pacifica, animation from "The Secret Life of Pets" and NBCUniversal talent will appear on Golf Channel, NBCSN, Sprout and USA Network.

This program also extends to NBCUniversal's extensive digital and social platforms and will feature campaign content.

It will also take advantage of NBCUniversal's Social Synch program.

Pictures may not reflect actual vehicle. *The FCA US LLC (formerly Chrysler Group) Employee Advantage Purchase program sale prices and lease payments quoted. Just add tax, title, doc fee and destination charge. **24, 36, 48, 60 month FCA US LLC employee leases. The amount due on all leases require amount due plus monthly tax, cap cost reduction fee, first payment, title, plate, doc fee and destination charge. Security deposit is waived on all lease payments. Lease payments are 10,000 miles per year. 20 cents per mile thru Ally or .25 cents thru Chrysler Capital for excess mileage. Customer must qualify for 1 or 5 year credit approval. Payments subject to change due to lower approved credit tier. Banks may require to prove income and residency for credit approval. Customer is responsible for excess wear and tear. Total deferred price is the sum of the purchase price, plus doc fee, plate fee, sales tax, and accrued finance charges over the term of the lease. All rebates and program monies assigned back to dealer. All prices and lease payments are based on FCA US LLC incentives thru the Great Lakes Business Center. Rebates as retail consumer cash, lease cash, lease loyalty, military, trade assist cash, finance bonus cash and all other Great Lakes offers will be applied. The dealer invoice amount is not a net factory price to dealer. Customers may not qualify for all offers, incentives, discounts or financing offers. See dealer for qualifications and complete details. Exclusive Huvaere new car cash coupon has been applied to all sale and lease payments in this ad. Vehicle sale prices include Chrysler Capital bonus cash-most finance thru Chrysler Capital. Ram leases include Great Lakes Truck Conquest Bonus cash. *Sale prices include lessee loyalty retail bonus cash, customer must qualify. 1.84 month buy, 2.99% APR with approved credit.



Carl Levin, his wife Barbara and Ray Mabus at the rendering of the newly commissioned U.S.S. Carl Levin.

Ford F-150 Does Well in New Safety Study

by DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) – The 2016 Ford F-150 is the only full-size pickup truck to score the top rating in new front crash tests performed by the insurance industry.

Rival pickups from Chevrolet, GMC, Ram and Toyota didn't fare as well, according to results released April 12 by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

The institute evaluated 2016 models in a small overlap crash test, which replicates what happens when a vehicle runs off the road and a portion of its front end hits a tree or a pole at 40 miles per hour.

The tests evaluated both crew cab and extended cab versions of each truck, since those are the most popular body styles. A crew cab has four full doors and two full rows of seating. An extended cab has two full front doors, two small rear doors and smaller second-row seats.

The institute also evaluated different body styles because past tests have shown varying results. In tests last year, the 2015 F-150 SuperCab – the extended cab version of the F-150 – lacked some of the structural elements of the larger F-150 SuperCrew, so it got lower safety ratings.

Ford responded by adding reinforcements to the 2016 SuperCab, including high-strength steel tubes in the wheel wells and aluminum rocker panels on the sides that help absorb energy from a crash. Ford also added nylon reinforcements to the door hinges. With those enhancements, both versions of the F-150 now have the institute's highest safety rating of "good."

The results were a vindication for Ford Motor Co., which switched to a lightweight aluminum body on the F-150 in the

2015 model year in order to increase fuel economy. Ford was the first automaker to move away from a steel body on its pickups, and some had questioned whether aluminum would perform as well.

Crash test results varied for other brands. The extended cab versions of the Chevrolet Silverado, GMC Sierra and Toyota Tundra, for example, all performed better than the larger crew cab versions. But the institute said all of them failed to protect the crash test dummy's lower leg and foot. None got the highest safety rating.

Toyota Motor Corp. is evaluating the results, spokeswoman Cindy Knight said. She stressed that the Tundra meets or exceeds all federal safety requirements. The institute performs a different set of tests than federal regulators.

Both versions of the Ram pickup were the worst performers on the small overlap test. The institute said the trucks had a poor structure and the force of the crash pushed the instrument panel and steering wheel back toward the dummy. A message seeking comment was left with Fiat Chrysler.

The institute also tested roof strength to see how well the pickups would protect an occupant in a rollover crash. Roof strength is especially critical for pickup trucks, since studies have shown that pickup drivers are less likely to wear seat belts. A crushed roof can break window

glass and doors and make it more likely that an unbelted occupant will be thrown from the vehicle.

The F-150, both Silverados, both Sierras and the Tundra Double Cab – the extended version of the Tundra – all got the highest ratings for roof strength. The Tundra CrewMax crew cab and both Rams got lower ratings.

The institute said it plans to test two more full-size pickup trucks, the Nissan Titan and the Honda Ridgeline, later this year after both are redesigned.

Retired Senator Carl Levin Honored by U.S. Navy

Longtime U.S. Senator Carl Levin was honored on April 11 by having a destroyer in the U.S. Navy named after him.

Levin, a Democrat, who served as a senator for Michigan from 1979 through 2015. Among the committees he served on was Armed Forces, eventually serving as its chair. It was recently announced that the Navy was naming a destroyer after him.

The Navy held a naming ceremony last week along the Detroit riverfront at the General Motors Renaissance Center. It was attended by Navy Secretary Ray Mabus.

The U.S.S. Carl Levin destroyer is part of the Arleigh Burke class and will be built at Bath Iron Works in Maine. It's expected to enter the fleet in 2020.

The Arleigh Burke class of guided missile destroyers (DDGs) is the United States Navy's first class of destroyer built around the Aegis Combat System and the SPY-1D multi-function passive electronically scanned array radar.

The class is named for Admiral Arleigh Burke, the most famous American destroyer officer of World War II, and later Chief of Naval Operations.

The class leader, USS Arleigh Burke, was commissioned during Admiral Burke's lifetime.

Also on hand to honor Levin were Michigan senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters.

Mabus said he was honored to be part of the naming ceremony

because he worked with Levin during his tenure in the Senate and said that Levin has worked hard to keep America safe.

"The Navy has a tradition of naming destroyers after American heroes," Mabus said. "Carl Levin is a true American hero."

Mabus said the destroyer being named after Levin is very much needed.

"On 9/11, the Navy had 316 ships in its fleet," Mabus said. "By 2008, that number was down to 217."

"During that seven-year period, 41 ship orders were placed under contract."

In the next seven years, 84 ships were placed under contract and by the end of this decade, the fleet will be over 300 ships again."

The Navy, Mabus said, needs these ships because the Navy and the Marine Corps are America's first responders that can answer the call around the world.

He credited Senator Levin for understanding this, and fighting to make sure that the Navy and all of America's armed forces had the weapons and equipment needed to protect the country.

Levin said that he was proud to have a destroyer named after him and that he was proud to support American armed forces.

He also thanked his staff and fellow senators, both Republicans and Democrats, for crossing party lines to work together to make sure the military had what it needed.

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Toyota Issues Camry Recall

TORRANCE, California (AP) – Toyota Motor Corp. is recalling 60,000 Avalon and Camry sedans in North America because their front passenger air bags may not deploy in a crash.

The recall involves Avalons and Camrys from the 2016 model year. Almost all were sold in the U.S.; about 1,500 were sold in Canada and Mexico.

Toyota says the cars have a system that activates or deactivates the front passenger air bags depending on the weight of the passenger. In some of the affected vehicles, the system was improperly calibrated, so the front passenger air bags and knee air bags may not deploy.

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GM Financial to Open New Center in Texas

The General Motors Financial Company broke ground April 11 on a new financial servicing center in San Antonio, Texas, in a ceremony that featured several notable city, county and state officials and community leaders as speakers, including Texas Governor Greg Abbott.

"We are proud to call San Antonio the future home of our fifth Servicing Center in North America, and excited to break ground on this new facility with the support and partnership of leaders from the city of San Antonio, Bexar County and the state of Texas," said GM Financial CEO Dan Berce.

"GM and GM Financial are committed to maintaining strong ties to this state, where combined we employ more than 10,000 people dedicated to building world-class vehicles and providing auto financing solutions to GM's customers and dealers."

Since becoming General Motors' captive finance company in 2010, GM Financial has actively expanded its capabilities and now offers a broad spectrum of auto financing solutions, including loan, lease and commercial financing products, to 16,000 dealers worldwide.

"Texas' welcoming business climate of low taxes and low regulations has propelled the Lone Star State to be a leader in job creation," said Governor Abbott. "I am proud that GM Financial has chosen San Antonio as the site of its next financial servicing center, creating nearly 500 jobs and investing tens of millions of dollars in the Texas economy. As Governor, I will continue to pursue policies that keep Texas the premier state for doing business, creating more opportunity and more jobs for Texas families."

GM Financial's 100,000-square-foot facility is planned for construction on 13.8 acres of land off of Raymond E. Stotzer Freeway at the intersection of Westover Link and North Ellison Drive.

Construction of the new building is targeted to begin in the spring of 2016, and the company plans to begin occupying the building in the spring of 2017, said GM Financial spokeswoman Lane Borrello.

GM Financial, which employs approximately 6,700 team members in the U.S. and Canada, also has financial servicing centers in Arlington, Texas; Chandler, Ariz.; Huntersville, N.C.; and Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, Borrello said.

The company also has 18 credit centers across the U.S. and Canada, including one in San Antonio, Texas, and is headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas.



Berce, left, and Gov. Abbott at GM Financial groundbreaking.

NLRB Rejects VW Appeal

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) – The National Labor Relations Board on April 13 declined to take up Volkswagen's challenge of a union vote at its lone U.S. assembly plant in Tennessee. The panel in a 2-1 decision declined to consider the appeal on the basis that it raised "no substantial issues warranting review."

Volkswagen had unsuccessfully sought to block a union vote among a group of about 160 workers specializing in the repair and maintenance of machinery and robots, arguing that labor decisions should be made by all 1,400 blue-collar workers at the plant. VW also questioned the timing of the vote amid its struggles to cope with the fallout of its diesel emissions scandal.

The NLRB's regional director allowed the vote to move forward and the United Auto Workers won the December election on a 108-44 vote, ending a decades-long losing streak in union elections among

foreign automakers in the South.

But Volkswagen declined to enter into contract negotiations while challenging the election to the federal labor panel.

The effort to unionize only a small portion of workers at the plant followed a narrow UAW defeat in a 2014 union vote among all hourly workers. In the run-up to that vote, state lawmakers warned that state tax credits could be threatened if the union won the election.

Anti-labor groups rented billboards around Chattanooga linking Detroit's woes to UAW success there, and Republican U.S. Sen. Bob Corker proclaimed that Volkswagen would quickly announce a decision to build a new SUV at the plant if the union was defeated. As it turned out, Volkswagen announced the new SUV would be produced in Chattanooga five months after the vote. The plant is scheduled to begin producing the new vehicle this year.

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GM is Vet-Friendly Company

For the second consecutive year, General Motors is the only automaker recognized by *Military Times* in its Best for Vets: Employers 2016 rankings.

The Best for Vets list evaluates company culture and policies that cater to military veterans, said GM spokesman Tom Rippinger.

“The recognition is a credit to the ongoing hard work of our military affairs, veteran hiring and employee resource group leaders,” said Ken Barrett, GM chief diversity officer and a former U.S. Navy captain. “Veterans bring a unique perspective and strong work ethic – and make us a better, stronger company.”

The award is based on a 90-question survey analyzing a company’s efforts to connect with veterans and provide an environment for success, Rippinger said. To view the complete list of companies, visit military-times.com/best-for-vets.

“We applaud GM’s ongoing efforts to hire and support its veteran employees, and we hope they inspire others in their industry to become ‘Best for Vets’ employers in 2017,” said Peter Lundquist, president, Sightline Media Group and general manager, *Military Times*.

Rippinger said GM has supported the U.S. military since 1917, when 90 percent of GM’s truck production was directed toward WWI manufacturing. During WWII, GM converted all its plant facilities in support of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s call for an “Arsenal of Democracy,” and has produced more U.S. military vehicles than any manufacturer in history.

Today, Rippinger said, more than 14,000 veterans work at GM facilities across the U.S., and GM partners with Building for America’s Bravest, Hiring Our Heroes

and the Achilles Freedom Team to support military families.

In 2016, GM was the only automaker named a top employer for military veterans and spouses by both G.I. Jobs and Military Spouse magazines.

GM is also committed to its active-duty, reserve and veteran customers, as well as their spouses. In honor of Military Appreciation Month, the military discount program for Chevrolet, Buick and GMC vehicles has been expanded to include all veterans, regardless of separation date, through May 31, 2016. To learn more, visit gmmilitarydiscount.com, Rippinger said.

Famed Tiger Willie Horton Gets Honor

DETROIT (AP) – The former site of Tiger Stadium in Detroit has been dedicated in the name of hometown sports hero Willie Horton.

The former Tiger spoke on the afternoon of April 13 at a ceremony to dedicate The Willie Horton Field of Dreams. The occasion also served as a groundbreaking for a youth sports facility and Detroit Police Athletic League headquarters.

Horton says the field will represent “the future” of young kids who use it.

Tiger Stadium opened in 1912 as Navin Field. The Tigers left for Comerica Park after the 1999 season.

The last of the old ballpark was demolished in 2009.

Horton spent 14 seasons with the Tigers and helped the team win the 1968 World Series. The Tigers retired his No. 23, and a statue of his likeness stands at Comerica Park.

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Ford Building \$1.6 Billion Assembly Plant in Mexico

by TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) – Ford Motor Co. plans to build a new \$1.6 billion auto assembly plant in Mexico, creating about 2,800 jobs and shifting small-car production from the U.S. at a time when moving jobs south of the border has become a major issue in the U.S. presidential campaign.

The company announced the plant in the San Luis Potosi state April 5 without saying specifically what cars it will build there. But the United Auto Workers union has said Ford plans to shift production of the Focus compact and C-Max small gas-electric hybrid from suburban Detroit to Mexico, where the cars can be made at lower cost and more profitably.

The UAW’s new four-year contract with Ford, signed last year, guarantees new vehicles for the Wayne, Michigan, assembly plant and a \$700 million investment that preserves the plant’s 3,924 jobs. Union members have said they expect the factory to get a new version of the Ranger small pickup and a new small SUV called the Bronco.

Ford announced the Mexican plant on the day of the key Wisconsin primary. Republican front-runner Donald Trump has railed about corporate America moving jobs to Mexico to take advantage of what he calls a lopsided trade deal. He has vowed to rewrite the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement, tax imports and punish U.S. companies, including Ford.

In response, the automaker has highlighted its investments in the U.S. At the New York auto show in March, CEO Mark Fields

said Ford spends more than 80 percent of its capital in the U.S. and has committed to spending another \$8 billion to \$9 billion in the next four years.

“Since 2011, we’ve invested over \$10 billion in our facilities. We’ve hired over 25,000 people” in the U.S., Fields said.

Auto and other manufacturing jobs have been moving south for years. Mexican auto production more than doubled in the past decade, and the consulting firm IHS Automotive expects it to rise another 50 percent to just under 5 million vehicles by 2022. U.S. production is expected to increase only 3 percent, to 12.2 million vehicles, in the next 7 years.

Joe Hinrichs, Ford’s president of the Americas, said Ford is a global company that builds cars where it makes the most financial sense. He confirmed the new plant would build small cars starting in 2018. “We’ve talked about improving our small-car profitability and this is an important part of that,” he said last week in an interview with The Associated Press.

Under the new UAW contract, Ford factory workers get about \$60 per hour in wages and benefits, while auto workers in Mexico average about \$8 per hour, according to the Center for Automotive Research, a Michigan industry think tank.

Trump began criticizing Ford last summer after the company said it planned to invest \$2.5 billion in engine and transmission plants in Mexico.

Trump hasn’t only targeted Ford. He has, for example, pledged to give up Oreos after Nabisco’s parent, Mondelez International, said it would shift production to Mexico.

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Takata Air Bags Still in Many Automobiles

DETROIT (AP) – About 85 million Takata air bag inflators that haven't been recalled are inside cars and trucks now being driven in the U.S. and would have to be replaced if the company can't prove they are safe, the government said April 13.

The number would be in addition to the 28.8 million inflators already slated for replacement in what has become the largest automotive recall in the nation's history. If all the inflators are recalled, they would total almost 114 million. A recall that massive would take years to complete and cost billions of dollars.

Unlike most air bag makers, Takata's inflators use the chemical ammonium nitrate to create a small explosion that fills air bags in a crash. But the chemical can burn too fast and explode with too much force, blowing apart a metal canister and hurling shrapnel at drivers and passengers. At least 11 people have died worldwide and over 100 have been hurt.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, which made the estimate, says it doesn't know how many vehicles have Takata air bags, but said many have more than one inflator made by the company.

Under the terms of an agreement reached with Takata last year, the Japanese parts supplier must prove to the agency that the unrecalled inflators are safe to use, or they must be recalled. The agency has said that it expects the number of Takata recalls to increase.

The problem has been linked to older cars with long-term exposure to high humidity. That's why replacement parts are being targeted to areas such as the U.S. Gulf Coast, although many of the cars have been recalled nationwide. No one knows for certain how long it takes for the ammonium nitrate to deteriorate or whether inflators in older cars in cooler, less-humid states might explode in the future. That makes the safety of Takata inflators – which are in driver, passenger and side air bags – a potentially deadly unknown.

Mark Rosekind, who heads NHTSA, said in a February letter to Congress that an immediate total recall of Takata air bags wouldn't provide significant safety benefits and could exceed the government's legal authority. It also would strain the network for replacement parts and increase uncertainty for consumers, he wrote in a letter to Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla.

Ally Financial is Opening New Detroit Offices

DETROIT (AP) – Financial services company Ally Financial is opening new offices in downtown Detroit that will be occupied by more than 1,500 employees and contractors.

The space in Ally Detroit Center spans 13 floors of the building and the company said last week it unites Ally's southeast Michigan-based employees.

About 350 Ally employees are moving into the building this month and most of the rest will be there by November.

Each floor was designed in the style of a distinct Detroit neighborhood, with furniture, fixtures and art installations that reflect the style of each area of the city. The floors include Foxtown, Rivertown, Greektown, Lafayette Park, Corktown, Indian Village and New Center.

Quicken Loans founder Dan Gilbert's Bedrock Real Estate Services owns the building.