# Tech Center News.

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2016 GMC Canyon

# 'Canyon is All-Around Great Truck' - Cars.com Editor

The 2016 GMC Canyon has been named the Best Midsize Pickup Truck of 2016.

Cars.com put the current lineup of midsize pickup trucks to the test in its Midsize Pickup Truck Challenge to determine the overall best option for buy-

Canyon, the segment's only premium midsize truck, was also named the top pick by the editors of Cars.com in a 2015 midsize pickup comparison test, said GM spokeswoman Kelly

"Establishing a benchmark for a premium midsize pickup was our goal with the Canyon, and PickupTruck.com's insights affirm our instincts," said Duncan Aldred, vice president of GMC Sales and Marketing.

"The Canyon's quiet cabin, premium design and materials make it a maneuverable solution for customers who want the capability of a pickup with the modern amenities customers expect from GMC.'

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

# GM, Army to Debut Hydrogen-Powered Auto

General Motors and TARDEC bring to the force incredibly value commercial and military off-road will reveal a Chevrolet Colorado hydrogen-based fuel cell electric vehicle in October at the fall meeting of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) in Washington, D.C.

The vehicle is being developed under an agreement between TARDEC (the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center) and GM that was signed in 2015, said GM spokesman Alan Adler.

The collaboration enables TARDEC to access consumer-driven automotive technology for use in military applications while providing GM with feedback on non-standard fuel cell technology applications.

Consistent with the Department of Defense's desire to leverage commercial innovation in its next-generation technologies, TARDEC spokesman Doug Halleaux said the Army will use the vehicle to demonstrate the capabilities fuel cell electric propulsion and power generation systems can bring to the military, including quieter mobility, exportable power generation, low-end torque and water gener-

The Army intends to conduct user assessments and demonstrations in 2017, said Halleaux.

"Hydrogen fuel cells as a power source have the potential to able capabilities," said TARDEC Director Paul Rogers.

"We expect the vehicle to be quiet in operation and ready to provide electricity generation for needs away from the vehi-"With fuel cell technology

advancing, it's an ideal time investigate its viability in extreme military-use condi-"Fuel cell propulsion has low-

end torque capability that is useful in an off-road environment," Rogers said.

"It also offers additional characteristics attractive to both

use."

Neither GM nor TARDEC released vehicle specifics, but Rogers said the Army is focusing on the technology and its capabilities, regardless of the plat-

"This project is another example of how fuel cell propulsion can play a role in non-traditional applications," said Charlie Freese, executive director of GM's Global Fuel Cell Activities.

"We need to continue pursuing these opportunities along with our plans for production of a commercial fuel cell system in the 2020 time frame.'



TARDEC and GM will unveil a fuel-cell electric vehicle in October.

# Fiat Chrysler August Sales In U.S. Increase 3 Percent

August sales was good.

The automaker reported U.S. sales of 196,756 units, a 3 percent increase compared with sales in August 2015 (190,887 units).

Fiat Chrysler's retail sales were 150,153 units in August, while fleet sales were 46,603 units. Retail sales represented 76 percent of total sales, while fleet sales

The news for Fiat Chrysler's were at 24 percent, said Fiat Chrysler spokesman Ralph Kisiel.

> The Jeep, Dodge and Ram Truck brands each posted yearover-year sales gains in August, led by the Jeep brand's 12 percent increase. Five of the six Jeep brand vehicles recorded sales in-

> > **CONTINUED ON PAGE 5**



2016 Jeep Cherokee

# **GM August Sales Down; Chevy Gains Market Share**

down about 5 percent from last year, but in line with the industry's retail performance for the

Based on initial estimates, Chevrolet's retail market share rose 0.4 percentage points in

Despite very tight dealer in- August to 11 percent. Chevrolet ventories, General Motors sold has gained retail market share in 212,915 vehicles to individual or seven out of eight months this "retail" customers in August, year and remains the industry's fastest-growing full-line brand.

> GM's total sales in August were down about 5 percent year over year to 256,429 vehicles.

Year to date, GM's perform-

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 6** 



2016 Chevrolet Volt

# Ford August Sales Down, But Vans Best Ever, MKX Soars

Overall U.S. Ford sales totaled 214,482 vehicles, an 8 percent decline from August of last year.

But not all the sales numbers were bad, said Ford spokesman Erich Merkle.

Lincoln sales rose 7 percent in the U.S. in August versus a year ago with 9,243 vehicles sold, while Ford Motor Company vans reached best-ever August sales with 20,355 vehicles sold.

Retail sales totaled 168,543 vehicles for the month - an 8 percent decrease. Fleet sales of 45.939 vehicles, including daily rental, commercial and government segments, were down 10 percent as well, Merkle said.

Lincoln's retail sales grew 10 percent, thanks to a 55 percent retail increase in Lincoln MKX

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 4** 



2016 Ford Expedition

#### Annual UAW Car Show Scheduled In Two Weeks

The UAW Region 1 Car and Motorcycle Show is coming to

The annual event takes place Sunday, Sept. 18, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., said Greg Ezyk, UAW Region 1 vice president of Solidarity Riders, a club of American motorcycle enthusiasts.

"The show – to be held at 27800 George Merrelli Drive in Warren right by UAW Local 160 is open to the public at no charge," Ezyk said.

"The show has always been held at the end of September. It's sort of the last car show of the year for a lot of people. Once this event is over, they put their vehicles into storage for the winter.'

Ezvk said all the money raised goes to the UAW's Veteran's Council, which has programs designed to help military veterans. The show is co-sponsored by the Veteran's Council and the Solidarity Riders.

"We want this show to be a family event," Ezyk said. "So it's open to everyone. It's free, but it costs \$20 for people entering a vehicle to be on display. Pre-registered vehicles can get in for \$18, and you don't have to be a UAW member to have a vehicle in the show. This is the second year we've had motorcycles. We're trying to expand the show.

This year, a number of different categories in which vehicles will be judged will be offered, Ezyk said. The car categories

• Original – 1900 - 1989;

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 6** 

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#### **Canyon Earns Praise for its Capabilities**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Testing, Wysocki said, included head-to-head comparisons in 18 objective categories and included the following vehicles: 2016 GMC Canyon, 2016 Chevrolet Colorado, 2017 Honda Ridgeline, 2016 Toyota Tacoma and 2016 Nissan Frontier.

"The Canyon is an all-around great truck," said Patrick Olsen, Cars.com editor-in-chief. "It is well-balanced and confident both on paved streets and offroad. It's a well-appointed truck on the interior and has some serious ability when it comes to payload and towing as well as overall engine performance."

Cars.com editors wrote of the Canyon, "finishing in first place by one of the slimmest margins in any test we've conducted, the GMC Canyon won this competition by keeping a slow and steady pace in each and every event.

"Yes, the Canyon won four objective test categories outright (two of which it tied with Chevy Colorado), but maybe more importantly, it finished first or second in the majority of categories, as well as scoring two and four points (out of a possible 1,000) ahead of the Ridgeline and Colorado, respectively, in the fivejudge portion of our test.

'Many of our experts commented on how well-balanced and confident the truck felt while on the track, driving around country roads and even

at the off-road park. The midlevel SLE package is decently appointed, collecting a solid number of points from most judges, while the structure of the vehicle put it at the top of the capability categories.

This pickup had the highest payload capacity and Gross Combination Weight Rating, it was the lightest of our competitors, was the only four-wheeldrive system in our test with a separate all-wheel-drive setting, and the V6 gas engine was both powerful and efficient.

"The GMC Canyon SLE is probably the best heart-of-themarket offering of the test, providing value and strength for those who need versatile capabilities in a downsized package.'

# **Federal Government Considering New Truck Speed Limits**

by TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) - The U.S. is seeking to forcibly limit how fast trucks, buses and other large vehicles can travel on the nation's highways.

A new proposal Aug. 26 would impose a nationwide limit by electronically capping speeds with a device on newly made U.S. vehicles that weigh more than 26,000 pounds. Regulators are considering a cap of 60, 65 or 68 mph, though that could change.

Whatever the speed limit, drivers would be physically prevented from exceeding it. The proposal, which comes from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, does not force older heavy vehicles to add the speed-limiting technology, but the regulators are still considering it.

The government said capping speeds for new large vehicles will reduce the 1,115 fatal crashes involving heavy trucks that occur each year and save \$1 billion in fuel costs.

While the news is being welcomed by some safety advocates and non-professional drivers, many truckers said that such changes could lead to dangerous scenarios where they are traveling at much lower speeds than everyone else.

The rule has been ensnared in a regulatory maze in the decade since the nonprofit group Roadsafe America issued its first petition in 2006. The group was

founded by Atlanta financial adviser Steve Owings and his wife Susan, whose son Cullum was killed by a speeding tractor-trailer during a trip back to school in Virginia after Thanksgiving in 2002. The nonprofit was later joined by the American Trucking Associations, the nation's largest trucking industry group.

Owings said he will continue to push NHTSA to force older heavy vehicles to limit their speeds.

"We are dismayed and outraged to learn the proposed rule will be for newly manufactured trucks and will not apply to the millions of trucks with which we continue to share the roads today," he said.

NHTSA said retrofitting vehicles made after 1990 with the speed-limiting technology could be too costly, and it is still seeking comments and additional information. NHTSA said it could cost anywhere from \$100 to \$2,000 per vehicle, depending on when the vehicle was made. Changes to some engines could also be required, increasing the costs, NHTSA said. Heavy vehicles made before 1990 don't have the capacity to add the technolo-

The government agencies involved will take public comment for 60 days, then determine the final limit and decide if the regulation should be put in place.

To James Chapman, a big rig driver from Spartanburg, S.C., 68 mph would be the best option and he'd accept 65. But 60 would be too big of a difference from cars that go 75 or more.

"To me it would be a safety hazard unless it slowed everybody else down," he said while refueling his truck Aug. 26 along interstate 75 near Findlay, Ohio. The agencies said that limiting

the speed of heavy vehicles to 60 mph could save as many as 498 lives annually. Limiting it to 65 mph could save as many as 214 lives, and limiting it to 68 mph could save as many as 96 lives. There are 3.6 million big rigs on U.S. roads.

The agencies said the proposal is based on available safety data and the additional benefit of better fuel economy.

But Norita Taylor, spokeswoman for the 157,000-member Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association, said her group has opposed the speed limiters because they create dangerous interactions between vehicles as faster cars slow down for trucks. "Differentials in speed increase interactions between vehicles, which increases the likelihood of crashes," Taylor said.

Yet there is another compelling reason to limit truck speeds. An investigation last year by The Associated Press found that 14 states have speed limits for big trucks that are equal to or higher than their tires were designed to handle. Most truck tires aren't designed to go faster than 75 mph, and tire manufacturers sav traveling faster than that can cause tires to fail and blow out, creating safety issues.

Most of the states with the higher speed limits are west of the Mississippi River. Of the 14, five have speed limits of 80 mph or more and allow trucks to exceed the capability of their tires.

NHTSA has said that the speed limiters should be able to take care of the discrepancy between state speed limits and truck tire capabilities.

Most of the states with speed limits of 80 or above either didn't know about the truck tire speed ratings or didn't consider them. States set their own speed limits, having been given sole authority to do so by Congress in the mid-1990s.



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# Cy-Laser Moves to Macomb

appointed president of Cy-Laser America. based in Sterling Heights.

Cy-Laser America is part of Cy-Laser SRL, which has its world headquarters in Schio, Italy. Denipoti's appointment is concurrent with Cy-Laser America's moving its North American headquarters from Geneva, Ill., to Sterling Heights, said Cy-Laser spokesman Jim Meloche.

The company is a worldwide provider of fiber optic laser systems for metal cutting, Meloche said. It's been around since 2004 and maintains a presence in the United States, Canada and Mexi-

"Massimo's many years of experience in bringing Italian machine tool companies to North America is a big asset for Cylaser America," said Federico Campana, CEO of Cy-Laser SRL. "In addition to his duties as president, (he) leads the sales management team. He is also a partner in Venture Systems (a business unit of Venture USA), the import and distribution company that helped Cy-Laser and several other Italian companies establish a presence in North America."

Campana also said that having the company's North American headquarters in Sterling Heights gives it the advantage of having an on-site demonstration and

Massimo Denipoti has been technical center near its customers as well as more space for the business to grow.

> Meloche said that in other staff moves Geff Smith was promoted to the position of Service and Support manager.

> Additionally, Meloche said, Melissa Reynolds has joined the company as its new Customer Service manager.





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#### Club GM Seeks **Volunteers for Cleanup Project**

Club GM is recruiting volunteers for a neighborhood cleanup project being sponsored by Rippling Hope, said Club GM President Ardin Hammel.

Rippling Hope is a nonprofit organization that helps heal neighborhoods by repairing and securing homes for low-income/ disabled/elderly in Detroit.

All of the work is "volunteer friendly" and can be assigned with the volunteer's abilities and comfort in mind.

The group's latest project is scheduled for Sept. 13, from 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Hammel said.

Rippling Hope, Hammel said, is looking for people to help with light home repairs, boarding up abandoned houses, yard work, office work and painting.

The event, Hammel said, is open to all GM employees and their families, as well as GM retirees. All children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Volunteers will meet at the Culver's Restaurant at 12 Mile and I-75 and carpool to the Rippling Hope project area.

To learn more about the project and how to sign up, contact Bill Knapp at 248-830-8373, or Trish Ruelle at 248-227-5522

GM employees may sign up for the project by going to the Team GM Cares Web site at teamgmcares.volunteermatch.org/search/opp2396234.jsp.

# TACOM Women's Group Earns Awards, Grants Scholarship



Danielle Smith

A college freshman earned a \$500 scholarship as a result of an award-winning fundraising program put on by a women's group.

The Detroit Arsenal's chapter of Federally Employed Women (FEW) earned two second-place awards at the national group's annual program in Dallas recent-

FEW is designed to improve the working status of women employed by the federal govern-

The local chapter, comprising about 45 members affiliated with the arsenal, won the national group's Chapter Fundraising Award and Chapter Special Project Award.

This year's Chapter Fundraising Award, Higgins said, recognizes the Great Lakes Chapter's "ingenuity in aligning its fundraising efforts" with a national nonprofit organization from the fundraising program, devoted to helping civilian federal and postal employees.

Several other chapters in the Great Lakes Region are now using this approach to raise money for local scholarship awards.

"Everyone who donated funds to us helped us earn this award," said Leslie Wilson-Smith, former chapter president. "From my viewpoint, it was an enterprise approach where we had support from everybody."

The Special Project Award honors the chapter's support to HAVEN, Oakland County's only comprehensive program for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. It provides shelter, counseling, advocacy and educational programming to nearly 20,000 people each year.

The program is often in need of food, clothing, bath, toiletry and household items, items for babies and children, and gift cards for gas, groceries and major retailers.

"HAVEN allows us to collect things that women who are fleeing for their lives need," said Wilson-Smith. "We collect funds to buy gift cards that they might use for a place to eat or a place to shop. We collect items for babies and toddlers and for personal hygiene. We have donated boxes of items that have been donated across the enterprise. I liked the special chapter project this year because it allows us to continue helping the community."

The scholarship, resulting

went to Danielle Smith (no relation to Wilson-Smith), one of the volunteers for the HAVEN project, Higgins said.

Danielle, the daughter of Rene Koop, the Great Lakes Chapter's vice president, is a recent high school graduate and incoming pre-med freshman at Michigan State University.

Wilson-Smith explained how Danielle became involved with

"She came to me and said, 'Would you mentor me and can I partner with FEW and support the shelter?' Just think, at the time when she did her first initiative, she was in 10th grade going into the 11th. We thought, how important is it for someone of

that young age to want to give back?'

Danielle has volunteered with HAVEN for three years.

"We remember where we came from because we have had challenges in our lives," said Koop. "We have had to stay with others and there are things we did not have. So I always told my daughter that if we ever got to a place where we could give back, we would share our resources.'

Koop said Smith's personal goal was to provide 10 baskets of donated goods a year. She collects items from such places as local doctor and dentist offices, classmates, and used her own money to put together baskets for babies. She supports FEW's coat drive for a soup kitchen.

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## **Autonomous Tech Partnerships Expand**

by The Associated Press

Uber announced Aug. 18 that it will partner with Volvo to make autonomous vehicles.

The tie-up is the latest between automakers and tech companies hoping to speed driverless cars to market.

Here's a rundown of who's working with whom:

• Uber/Volvo/Toyota/Otto – Ride-hailing company Uber Technologies and Volvo Cars signed a \$300 million deal for Volvo to provide SUVs to Uber for autonomous vehicle re-

The Volvo SUVs will be part of Uber's self-driving fleet of taxis in Pittsburgh.

Both companies will continue to develop autonomous vehicles separately. Uber also is buying Otto, a startup that has developed software that lets big rigs drive autonomously. Earlier this year, Toyota Motor Corp. bought a small stake in Uber for an undisclosed amount.

• Lyft/GM/Cruise Automation - General Motors Co. invested \$500 million in Uber rival Lyft Inc. earlier this year. The companies are developing a fleet of autonomous electric taxis that could be deployed through Lyft within the next year.

GM also acquired Cruise Automation, a startup that makes autonomous vehicle software, for \$581 million.

• Lyft/Didi Chuxing/Uber/Apple - Chinese ride-hailing company Didi Chuxing invested \$100 million in Lyft last fall. The partnership allows U.S. customers to use the Lyft app to hail Didi rides while in China and vice versa. Uber recently complicated that deal by selling its China business to Didi in exchange for an 18 percent stake in the Chinese compa-

And there's another wrinkle: Apple Inc., which is believed to be working on its own autonomous cars, invested \$1 billion in Didi in May.

 Google/Fiat Chrysler Alphabet Inc.'s Google, which has been working on self-driving cars since 2009, is working with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles to build 100 self-driving Chrysler Pacifica minivans. The vans will let Google double the size of its autonomous test fleet.

• Volkswagen/Gett - Volkswagen AG invested \$300 million in Uber competitor Gett Inc. in May. Gett said it would provide Volk-

swagen with the technology to expand beyond car ownership and into ride- and car-sharing.

• BMW/Intel/Mobileye - BMW AG, Intel Corp. and Israel's Mobileye NV are teaming up to build and commercialize driverless cars. The companies say they could have autonomous vehicles in production by 2021.

BMW's iNext electric sedan will serve as the platform for the technology. Intel makes the computer processors necessary to operate self-driving cars, while Mobileve makes advanced camera systems. The vehicles would likely be used by ride-sharing fleets.

• Ford/Velodyne/Baidu - Ford Motor Co. is aiming to have fully self-driving cars - with no steering wheels or pedals - in ridesharing fleets by 2021. Ford and Chinese search engine company Baidu Inc. - which has also invested in Uber - are investing \$150 million in Velodyne, which makes the laser sensors that help guide self-driving cars.

Ford also acquired Israelbased SAIPS for its expertise in artificial intelligence and computer vision, and invested in Berkeley, Calif.-based Civil Maps.

- Audi/Mercedes/BMW/Here Last fall, Nokia Corp. sold its digital mapping business, Here, to a consortium of German automakers for \$3 billion. Audi, BMW and Mercedes say precise maps are a key to developing autonomous cars as well as advanced driver assistance features.
- Nissan/NASA Under a fiveyear partnership, researchers from Nissan and NASA are working on autonomous driving systems and human-machine interface projects with software that can be used on both cars and planetary rovers. Nissan hopes to have self-driving cars on the road by 2020.

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# Ford August Sales Down, But Vans Best Ever, MKX Soars

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1** 

sales and an 8 percent uptick in MKZ retail sales.

"Strong sales of high-end Lincoln vehicles and Ford SUVs also helped us continue outpacing the industry in average transaction pricing, which increased \$1,200 versus a year ago," said Mark LaNeve, Ford vice president, U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service.

August's record van sales were up 13 percent versus a year ago,

driven largely by Ford Transit gaining 17 percent.

Total truck sales were down 2 percent, with 88,372 vehicles sold. Ford F-Series sales of 66,946 trucks mark a 6 percent decline and F-Series' best retail month of

Some Ford August 2015-2016 sales highlights:

- Focus 16,321 versus 11,772, a 27.9 percent decline;
- Expedition 3,401 versus 5,725, a 68.3 percent increase;
- Escape 28,870 versus 28,061, a 2.8 percent decline; • Edge – 11,832 versus 11,204,
- a 5.3 percent decline; • Lincoln MKZ – 2,571 versus
- 2,754, a 7.1 percent increase; • Lincoln MKX – 1,763 versus

2,643, a 49.9 percent increase.

### **GM** is Recalling **368,000 Vehicles**

(AP) - General Motors is recalling nearly 368,000 vehicles to fix a defective part that could prevent the windshield wipers from working.

The problem affects the 2013 models of the Chevrolet Equinox and GMC Terrain. GM says those vehicles were built with ball joints that could corrode and wear out to render the windshield wipers inoperable.

A report filed with government regulators says a GM manager in Canada spotted the potential safety hazard last December. The auto manufacturer opened an investigation in March and decided to issue a recall in early August.

Chevrolet Equinox owners can call 1-800-222-1020 and GMC Terrain owners can call 1-800-462-8782 for further information.

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# Fiat Chrysler August Sales Rise 3 Percent

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1** 

creases in August, with the Jeep Cherokee turning in the largest percentage year-over-year gain -41 percent, Kisiel said.

The Dodge brand delivered higher year-over-year sales as the Charger, Challenger, Journey, Grand Caravan, Durango and Viper all recorded sales gains in August, helping to propel the brand to a 5 percent increase. Likewise, the Ram Truck brand was up with the ProMaster and ProMaster City vans each recording year-over-year sales increases for the month.

Charger sales were up 24 percent in August, while the Challenger turned in a 5 percent sales gain. Sales of the Dodge Durango full-size SUV, the Dodge Grand Caravan minivan, the Dodge Journey crossover and the Dodge Viper were all up in August as well.

The Dodge brand last month used the Woodward Dream Cruise to debut its new 2017 Challenger T/A and Charger Daytona - two performance-upgraded models.

Production for both models will begin this fall with Charger Daytona models available for order in September, followed by Challenger T/A models this Octo-

Ram Truck brand sales, which include the Ram pickup, ProMas-

ter and ProMaster City, were up 2 percent in August versus the same month a year ago.

Both the ProMaster and Pro-Master City vans turned in double-digit percentage sales gains in August, led by the ProMaster City's 32 percent increase. The ProMaster City is the newest addition to the brand's commercial vehicle lineup and contributes to the expanding, purpose-built van segment with a number of bestin-class, functional elements tied directly to commercial customer demand, said Kisiel. Sales of the Ram pickup truck were flat in August.

Fiat brand sales, which include the Fiat 500, 500L, 500X and 124 Spider, were down 21 percent in in 2015.

August. In its second month on sale, the 2017 Fiat 124 Spider logged 460 sales in August. It was last sold in the U.S. in 1985.

The news wasn't all good. Kisiel said Chrysler brand sales were down 22 percent in August compared with the same month a year ago. While sales of the Chrysler 300 full-size sedan were up 22 percent - 4,339 versus 5,274 – compared with the same month a year ago, sales of the 200 were down  $6\overline{6}$  percent, going from 12,538 to 4,210.

The new Chrysler Pacifica logged 7,459 in sales in August.

And sales of the Town & Country minivan dropped 75 percent – 1,809 in 2016 compared to 7,255

# VW Ponders Supplier Issues

BERLIN (AP) - Volkswagen's off suggests the company may employee council chief is suggesting that the automaker consider taking stakes in suppliers after a dispute disrupted production in Germany.

Volkswagen on Aug. 26 ended the dispute with two suppliers who stopped delivering parts, briefly affecting nearly 28,000 workers at six plants.

Employee council chief Bernd Osterloh, who sits on Volkswagen's supervisory board, told news agency dpa in comments published Aug. 26 that the standneed "an extra warning system" to reduce risks.

Osterloh added that it is "a conceivable approach to this is minority stakes" or rights of first refusal.

Osterloh noted that one of Volkswagen's rival – Toyota – has stakes in many of its parts sup-

"I don't want to say that Volkswagen should take stakes in all its suppliers," Osterloh said. "But it would perhaps be a way at vulnerable key points."

# Ram Challenge: Higher Market Share for Vans

by Jim Stickford

Commercial vans might not have the cachet of performance vehicles like the Hellcat Charger, but there is pent-up demand for these types of vehicles and Ram wants to improve its market

"It's funny," said Dave Sowers, head of Ram Commercial Vehicle Marketing. "We have a saying that when you're a 'car guy' you look for brightly-colored red and yellow sports cars on the road. But when you're a commercial vehicle guy, you start looking for a ladder rack on top of a van or a business logo on the side of the van. Being on the commercial side changes your perspective."

And now is a good time to have a strong commercial vehicle division, Sowers said.

There's still pent-up demand for commercial vans," Sowers said. "The average age of a commercial van on the road today is seven years old. And the most numerous of the commercial vans on the road today is a model-year 2006 van."

Sowers said that commercial van sales are like the canary in the coal mine. When sales drop, that's usually an indication that retail vehicle sales are headed down in the near future. And when commercial vehicle sales go up, that usually means good news for future retail vehicle

"The recession of 2008 and 2009 really hurt small businesses and many put off buying new work vans," Sowers said. "As the economy recovered, these businesses began getting new work vans, but we know there's still pent-up demand. But a lot has changed since many of these businesses last bought commercial vans."

And it's these changes that give Ram an opportunity to grow its commercial vehicle subdivision, Sowers said. It was created out of Ram because it allowed Fiat Chrysler to have a department that focuses directly on the commercial vehicle market.

market has changed, thanks to vehicles like the Ram ProMaster and the Ford Transit. These vans, Sowers said, are based more along European concepts



Dave Sowers, head of Ram Commercial Vehicle Marketing

of a commercial van.

That means they have a unibody design rather than a bodyon-frame design.

This difference between American and European van designs comes down to the pickup truck, Sowers said. Traditionally, American van designs were based on the popular pickup-style body and frame.

But Europe doesn't have the pickup tradition of North America, Sowers said. So their commercial vans, he added, were built around a unibody design, which is more efficient and more optimized in terms of weight. storage room, and fuel mileage when combined with modern powertrains.

"I feel comfortable saying this," Sowers said. "The ProMaster City is America's most efficient work van based on payload capacity and fuel efficiency.'

Payload capacity is the result of another difference between American and European commercial vans, Sowers said, noting that European vans are boxier, which makes it easier to store boxes and packages, while in American vans, there's a lot of wasted space.

The ProMaster City can haul 130 cubic feet of goods weighing up to 1,800 pounds while getting 29 miles to the gallon.

That's very good compared to And the commercial vehicle a commercial van from 2006," Sowers said. "And that's the challenge for Ram. Business owners are often very busy running their businesses and they don't have a lot of time to spend researching

improvements in vans. They are often loyal to a salesman or a dealership.'

And, Sowers said, because the ProMaster City has front-wheel drive, it has extra space in the rear.

"This gives us the ability to have a low-load floor," Sowers said. "That means the floor is lower to the ground, which makes getting cargo in and out easier. We're able to do this because there's a genuine, fully independent, dual-link rear suspension and no driveshaft taking up space. Front-wheel drive also helps give the ProMaster City great traction and a great turning radius."

But if Ram can get business owners to spend a little extra time learning about the improvements in Ram commercial vans, then Ram can get their business.

To connect with these business owners, Ram has spent money advertising in trade publications and visiting trade shows, Sowers said. They also do targeted Internet advertising.

"And that's been working," he

"When the Ram Commercial Vehicle sub-brand was spun off from Ram in 2012, we had about 10 percent of the commercial market. We're up to about 15 percent and I say that's not high enough. We need to grow fur-

And with the new ProMaster and ProMaster City, said Sowers, Ram has the right vehicle at the right time to really see growth in the commercial vehicle segment.



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#### Annual UAW Car Show Scheduled In Two Weeks

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

- Original modified three major enhancements;
- Street rod 1900 through 1948:
  - Custom/special interest;
- Pro street tubbed: rear axle;
- Street machine 1949 to the present:
- Trucks all years.
- The motorcycle categories will
- Cruisers soft tail, road king, etc.;
- Bagger hard bags, cruise
- control; • Metric - foreign production
- bikes Custom-build – choppers/

non-production motorcycles.

In addition to vehicles, other attractions will be aimed at families, including a climbing wall, bouncy tents and a miniature trolley that children will be able

### **GM August Sales Down; Chevy Gains** Market Share

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ance is reflecting a very strong retail business.

Retail share is up 0.5 percentage points and Average Transaction Prices (ATPs) are up more than \$2,500.

Disciplined incentive spending is in line with 2015 and daily rental deliveries are down 34 percent. The result is disciplined inventory levels and growing availability of key launch products, said GM spokesman Dan Flores.

Through the first eight months of the year, GM retail sales are up 1 percent, which continues to be the largest retail share gain of any full-line automaker, he said.

Year to date, Chevrolet retail sales are up more than 2 percent and the brand's retail share has grown 0.5 percentage points. Year to date, Buick retail deliveries have grown 3 percent and Buick has gained 0.1 percentage points of retail share.

"Despite tighter dealer inventories, we had a solid retail performance in August led by Chevrolet, which gained retail share in eight different segments," said Kurt McNeil, U.S. vice president of Sales Operations.

"Our retail strength is reflected in our record ATPs in August, which were up more than \$1,600 from last month and nearly \$5,800 above the industry average, while our incentive spending was below the industry average and well below our domestic

In addition, GM continues to take advantage of a strong, stable U.S. economy and industry, McNeil said.

"All the economic factors continue to point toward a strong second half of the year and another potential record year for the industry," said Mustafa Mohatarem, GM's chief economist

"We think the industry is well positioned for a sustainable high level of customer demand."

Sales highlights for August 2016 compared with August 2015:

- Colorado, Suburban, Tahoe and Trax were up 35, 42, 29 and 17 percent, respectively;
- Canyon, Yukon and Yukon XL were up 39, 43 and 66 percent, respectively;
- Cruze, Malibu, Corvette and Volt were up 18, 9, 16 and 52 percent, respectively;
- Year to date, Encore was up 21 percent.



Meritor volunteers dropped and gave 20 to help veterans.

# Volunteers Raise Veteran Awareness with Push-ups

drill sergeant says, "Drop and give me 20." But that's what volunteers did at Meritor, located in Troy, as a way to help veterans.

spokeswoman Cheryl Kilborn, were part of a worldwide viral pushup challenge on Aug. 29 to honor those who serve and raise awareness for veteran suicide prevention.

In addition, the company contributed \$5,000 from the Meritor Trust to provide outreach and resources for active-duty members and veterans. On average each day, 22 veterans commit suicide.

Kilborn said Meritor volunteers completed 3,970 push-ups. As part of the 22KILL challenge, Meritor uploaded a video to YouTube that demonstrates its commitment to veterans and the passion of its employees. 22KILL's goal is to log 22 million pushups by people around the world.

"Meritor has a proud history of building components that of-

It's a bit of a cliche – the tough fer unparalleled performance and protection for those who protect us," said Jay Craig, CEO and president of Meritor.

"We also extend our assistance The push-ups, said Meritor to veterans who have so honorably served in the armed forces through a variety of voluntary efforts championed by employees and funding from the Meritor Trust.'

> Army Reserve 1st Lt. Dave Rice of Davisburg, Mich., who is a manager of Product Validation Program Management for Meritor, demonstrated military-style pushups with Army Sgt.1st Class Paul Miller, Sgt. 1st Class Juan Martinez and Staff Sgt. Christopher Haddon of the 2nd Battalion, 337th Regiment Combat Support/Combat Service Support in Waterford, Kilborn said.

> "This issue is particularly important to me because I knew soldiers who have taken their own lives. The personal connection is very real," said Rice, who leads Meritor's Veterans Business Resource Group (VBRG).



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