

Buick Gets Domestics' Reliability Nod

by Jim Stickford

Consumer Reports' latest reliability study results have been released – and the big winner is Buick.

The results were announced to the Automotive Press Association at the Detroit Athletic Club Oct. 24.

Jake Fisher, director of Automotive Testing for *Consumer Reports*, said the Buick brand has become the first domestic brand in more than three decades to earn a place in the top three most reliable brands survey conducted by *Consumer Reports*. Lexus and Toyota were No. 1 and No. 2, respectively.

He also noted that Honda's popular Civic model earned a "much-worse-than-average" reliability rating.

"Buick's achievement is commendable and sure to be a wake-up call to other manufacturers," Fisher said.

"One reason why the brand has been able to leapfrog others in the General Motors stable has been its limited vehicle lineup – with none of the pickups and truck-based SUVs that have negatively impacted Cadillac and Chevrolet."

Fisher said Chevrolet saw gains, moving up five spots since 2015.

"The brand was helped in par-

ticular by the stellar reliability of the redesigned 2016 Cruze, which topped all compact cars, and the Corvette, which moved up to average," Fisher said.

"Cadillac has two models with below-average reliability, the Escalade and the small ATS sedan. While the CTS and XTS sedans were average or better. GMC dropped, hurt by its versions of the same large SUVs and pickup trucks that haunt Chevrolet."

Big trucks and SUVs tended to do poorly, Fisher said. The reason is that transmissions with more ratios and advanced drive-trains continue to be a challenge for a number of brands, he said.

While the Acura and Jeep Cherokee have seen improve-

ments in the reliability of their nine-speed automatics, he said, earlier models are still problematic. And, he added, Ford's dual-clutch automatic transmission continues to afflict the Fiesta and Focus, which is one reason they are among the lowest-scoring models.

Fisher noted that Fiat Chrysler has some troubles, but that the Chrysler 300, Dodge Grand Caravan and Jeep Patriot managed to have an average or better score.

He said *Consumer Reports* gathered information from its subscribers who have collectively owned or leased over half-a-million vehicles from model

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2016 Buick LaCrosse



Warren Assembly employees work on a 2016 Ram 1500 engine.

FCA Warren Truck Assembly Granted WCM Bronze Status

The Fiat Chrysler Warren Truck Assembly Plant has been awarded bronze status for its efforts in implementing World Class Manufacturing (WCM).

It becomes the 20th North American facility to reach the milestone and brings to seven the number of plants that have been designated bronze in 2016, said Fiat Chrysler spokeswoman Jodi Tinson.

The 78-year-old suburban Detroit truck plant earned bronze after receiving a minimum of 50 points in 10 technical and 10

managerial pillars following a two-day independent audit held Oct. 24 and 25, Tinson said.

The plant demonstrated clear WCM know-how and competence through employee-conducted pillar presentations and a review of projects implemented across the shop floor. The designation recognizes the long-term commitment of a workforce to making significant changes that can secure the future of a facility.

"Reaching bronze is a signifi-

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Dignitaries and soldiers inspect prototype of new Stryker Carrier.

New Stryker Carrier to Give Soldiers Unfair Advantage

by Jim Stickford

The first prototype of the new U.S. Army Stryker Infantry Carrier military vehicle was rolled out at General Dynamics' Land Systems headquarters in Sterling Heights Oct. 27.

"Not only does this provide improved firepower, it also enhances vehicle survivability while providing stand-off against potential threat weapons," said Maj. Gen. David G. Bassett, the Army's program executive officer for Ground Combat Systems. "This symbolic event illustrates the Army's commitment to meeting the needs of our soldiers in harm's way – ahead of schedule and on budget."

The vehicle is outfitted with a 30mm cannon for increased lethality, said Col. Glenn Dean, Stryker project manager. This is the first of eight prototype vehicles upgraded with significant

lethality capabilities to address an emerging capability gap in the European theater of operations.

Last July, the Army approved a Directed Requirement to increase lethality for 81 Stryker vehicles for the 2nd Cavalry Regiment to provide Stryker Brigade Combat Teams (SBCTs) with direct fire support to its mounted and dismounted infantry, Dean said.

This led to an accelerated acquisition effort to integrate an unmanned turret with a 30mm cannon on to a Stryker Infantry Carrier Vehicle. The Army expects this vehicle to be in the field by 2018.

"Future operations will take place concurrently in the air and on the ground, increasingly in urban settings, integrating capabilities from the domains of sea, space and cyberspace," said

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3Q Earnings Mixed for Detroit 3

GM Profits Double From Last Year

by TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) – General Motors doesn't seem too worried about slowing U.S. auto sales or economic troubles in Europe. If third-quarter numbers are any indication, the company has numbers to back that up.

The Detroit automaker reported a record profit on Oct. 25 that doubled results in the third quarter a year ago. And the automaker put a little more swagger behind its full-year guidance, predicting pretax earnings at the high end of previous forecasts of \$5.50 to \$6 per share.

GM earned \$2.77 billion, or \$1.76 per share, compared with \$1.36 billion, or 84 cents per share a year ago. Revenue hit a record \$42.8 billion.

The performance is largely because the company shunned low-profit sales to rental car companies in the U.S., keeping prices and profits high. GM also made \$500 million off its Chinese joint venture and reduced losses by about \$100 million each in Europe and South America.

"Very much on track to deliver the performance that we promised at the beginning of the year, which is higher profit, higher margins," Chief Financial Officer Chuck Stevens said. "In essence, another record year."

The numbers came despite sales falling 4 percent through

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FIAT CHRYSLER Net Profits Up To \$659 Million

by COLLEEN BARRY
AP Business Writer

MILAN (AP) – Fiat Chrysler Automobiles on Oct. 24 increased its 2016 earnings forecast for the second time this year after strong results in North America helped it return to a profit in the third quarter.

The company reported an adjusted net profit of 606 million euros (\$659 million), compared with a loss of 387 million euros in the same period last year.

Revenues were flat at 26.8 billion euros, with deliveries down marginally to 1.12 million units.

The group raised its profit forecasts for this year to above 2.3 billion euros from above 2 billion euros, while confirming net revenues of above 112 billion euros.

North America accounted for two-thirds of revenues and 85 percent of the profit in the third quarter, notwithstanding an 8 percent decrease in shipments as the carmaker realigns its product offer in favor of Jeep and Ram.

Shipments in the United states were down 45,000 units, mostly reflecting reductions to production of the Chrysler 200 and Dodge Dart.

CEO Sergio Marchionne told an analyst conference call that the production lulls wouldn't be

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FORD Income 56 Percent Less Than 2015

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP) – Troubles in Ford Motor Co.'s home market – including a massive recall and the difficult launch of new heavy-duty pickups – are hurting the company's bottom line.

Ford said Oct. 27 its net income plunged 56 percent to \$957 million in the third quarter, down from \$2.2 billion in the July-September period a year ago.

The earnings, of 24 cents per share, compared to earnings of 55 cents per share in the July-September period a year ago. Adjusted earnings of 26 cents per share – which exclude one-time items – beat Wall Street's forecast of 20 cents, according to analysts polled by FactSet.

North America, with its record-setting U.S. sales and love affair with profitable SUVs and pickups, has been Ford's cash cow in recent years. But as U.S. sales peak, Ford is feeling the effects. Ford's North American sales were down 11 percent in the quarter, and revenue dropped 8 percent. The company has already announced temporary closures of four North American plants this month to bring production in line with demand.

"What's happening to the company is really about what's happening in North America," Ford Chief Financial Officer Bob Shanks said.

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

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www.DetroitAutoScene.com

Mopar's SEMA Show Uses Internet Tech

This year what happens in Vegas won't have to stay in Vegas.

The upcoming Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) show in Las Vegas gives automakers the chance to show their stuff by offering consumers the ability to really customize their vehicles – and Fiat Chrysler isn't passing on that opportunity this year.

The annual Mopar press event is a tradition at SEMA, said Fiat Chrysler spokesman Ariel Gavilan.

It will take place at its usual 7:26 p.m. EST on Tuesday, Nov. 1. A live webcast of the press event will be available at <https://livestream.com/FCALive/MoparSEMA2016>.

"With the show coming up, it means it's time for Mopar to unleash teaser sketches of the brand's modified SEMA rides waiting to be displayed at the Las Vegas Convention Center on November 1-4," said Gavilan.

"Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep and Ram vehicles, re-imagined with Mopar production and concept parts and accessories, will share the stage with hundreds of Mopar products on display at the premier automotive specialty products trade show."

A total of 14 Fiat Chrysler vehicles will spread out over the 15,345-square-foot Mopar exhibit, Gavilan said.

That includes Mopar-modified vehicles created especially for SEMA.

Feds Proposing New Automotive Cyber Regs

DETROIT (AP) – The government's highway safety agency says automakers should make cybersecurity part of their product development process by assessing risks and designing in protections.

Companies also should identify safety critical systems such as engine control computers and limit their exposure to attacks, under best practice guidelines released Oct. 24 by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The agency also wants automakers to limit access to car owners' personal data.

The guidelines aren't requirements but will go into effect after a 30-day public comment period.

"Our intention with today's guidance is to provide best practices to help protect against breaches and other security failures," said Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, who oversees NHTSA.

Many of the recommendations focus on computer software written to get engines to perform. The agency suggests that companies control who has access to firmware, the software that runs car computers, and limit the ability to modify it to thwart malware.

Warren Transmission, DTE Go Green with Solar Panels

by Jim Stickford

GM unveiled a solar project at its Warren Transmission site Oct. 28 that's good for the environment. The GM Foundation also presented grants that are good for the surrounding community.

The solar project is part of a larger effort by GM and DTE Energy to increase the use of renewable energy.

Solar panels are placed on GM property and the energy produced is fed into the larger DTE electrical grid, said Frank Niscoromni, DTE program manager for Renewable Energy.

GM and DTE already have placed solar panels at GM's Hamtramck and Orion assembly plants.

"These projects are part of a pilot program DTE initiated in 2009," Niscoromni said.

"Here at Warren Transmission and those two other GM sites, we lease the property where the panels are placed from GM."

"One reason we picked the Warren facility is because it's near our Mound power grid distribution site."

"The power generated at Warren Transmission is sent to the Mound junction and feeds the surrounding area."

Niscoromni said that the energy generated at Warren Transmission should be enough to power about 155 normal-sized homes and is GM's largest solar array in Michigan.

"We are bullish on renewable energy because it reduces costs and reduces the impact on the environment," said Rob Threl-



GM's Warren Transmission site is now home to an array of solar panels.

keld, GM global manager of Renewable Energy.

"I also want to say that this facility is landfill-free."

"So think about it. When you take a bag of trash to the curb to be picked up, you are putting more trash in a landfill than the entire Warren Transmission facility."

"We owe it to not only our generation, but to future generations to fight climate change. This site is a part of that effort."

And GM is working toward meeting the electricity needs of all its global operations with 100 percent renewable energy by the year 2050, Threlkeld said.

"This goal is part of the company's overall approach to strengthening its business, improving communities and addressing its impact on the climate," Threlkeld said.

GM also took the opportunity to present \$100,000 in grants to

support 10 Warren-area nonprofit organizations.

Jackie Parker, president of the General Motors Foundation, presented the grants. She said the \$100,000 given to Warren-area groups is just part of a larger effort by the foundation to help the communities in which GM operates.

"This year, the GM community Grants program will provide nearly \$2 million in funding to hundreds of organizations in 47 communities where GM employees live and work," Parker said.

"Through these community grants, the GM Foundation is building stronger communities and enriching the lives of its neighbors."

The 10 groups receiving grants were:

- Family Youth Interventions;
- Winning Futures;
- Big Brother/Big Sisters of Metropolitan Detroit;
- Macomb Science Olympiad;
- The Judson Center;
- The Clinton River Watershed Council;
- The Detroit Downriver A. Philip Randolph Institute;
- The Urban League of Detroit and Southeast Michigan;
- The Motor City Symphony Orchestra (formerly known as the Warren Symphony Orchestra);
- Advancing Macomb.

Pickup Headlights Are Poor

DETROIT (AP) – Pickup truck headlights performed poorly in new tests by the insurance industry.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety tests measured how far light carries from the trucks' high beams and low beams, both on straight roads and curves. They also measured the amount of glare that could affect oncoming drivers. The results were released last week.

Seven of the 11 small and full-size pickups tested earned the lowest score of "poor." If the trucks offered multiple headlight combinations, the institute's ratings were based on the best available headlight system.

All of the pickups tested were from the 2016 or 2017 model years.

Excessive glare was a problem

on nearly every model that was tested, the institute said.

Only one large pickup, the 2017 Honda Ridgeline, earned the highest rating for the headlights on its most expensive models. The Ridgeline's headlights provided good visibility on most roads.

Among full-size pickups, the GMC Sierra earned the second-highest rating of "acceptable," while the Nissan Titan and Ram 1500 earned "marginal" ratings.

The Ford F-150, Chevrolet Silverado and Toyota Tundra full-size pickups also earned "poor" ratings.

Both the low-beams and the high-beams on the F-150 – the best-selling full-size pickup in the U.S. – provided inadequate visibility, even with optional LED lights added, the institute said.

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Buick Tops Domestics in Reliability Survey

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years 2000 to 2016, with a smattering of 2017s. This survey covered more than 300 models. Vehicle reports had to have enough of a history to measure, so new vehicles like the Chrysler Pacifica weren't rated.

One of the trends discovered, Fisher said, was that vehicles with new, complicated transmissions proved less reliable. That was a major reason he cited for the decline in the Honda Civic.

"It takes time for the bugs to be ironed out when talking about new technology such as the more sophisticated transmissions that car companies are putting in vehicles," Fisher said.

The same holds true for infotainment systems and in-car electronics, he said.

"We're seeing more problems with these sophisticated systems," Fisher said. "But the OEMs are learning. The days of seeing 20 percent problem rates are going down to 5 percent. But so many vehicles are in-fleet with these systems, so we're seeing a lot more electronics, which means more problems."

When asked how problems were rated, Fisher said they do weight problems so an engine problem was rated in a more serious way than a problem with a USB port.

He added that *Consumer Reports* didn't factor in recall issues unless a respondent's



Jake Fisher of Consumer Reports relates survey results at D.A.C.

vehicle actually experienced the vehicle's recall problem.

Overall, Fisher said, the Buick brand was in the highest category of "more reliable," while Ford and Chevrolet were rated to the middle category of "reliable."

Buick brand spokesman Stuart Fowle said, "We didn't have an indication of where Buick would land. I think the results show that Buick provides great quality across the board. When we survey customers, they cite quality consistently as one of the top three reasons they buy a Buick."

Fowle also said the survey shows that Buick doesn't have a model that is head-and-shoulders above the rest of Buick's output because all the models are high quality.

Nick Richards, a GM spokesman,

said Cruze topping its category is the result of talking with customers and finding ways for people to improve their product.

Fisher said the success of the Cruze shows that when Detroit puts its mind to something it can make great vehicles. He said that the Cruze is not unprecedented.

"The Cruze is not the first time Detroit made a vehicle more reliable than the Japanese," Fisher said.

"When you think of small cars, you think of the Japanese, but the previous version of the Ford Focus used to beat the Toyota Camry and Honda Accord. This quality can be done if car companies bring in technology in a methodical way and try not to amaze people by overloading vehicles with new technology."

FCA Warren Truck Assembly Granted WCM Bronze Status

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cant achievement as it confirms the workforce's understanding of the WCM methodology and its dedication to implementing best practices that will make our facilities the best in the world," said Brian Harlow, vice president – Manufacturing, FCA North America.

"At Warren Truck and across our global manufacturing footprint, our employees now have the tools and resources to eliminate waste by improving processes, increasing productivity, and improving quality and safety, while at the same time putting dignity into the workplace."

"Our Warren Truck workforce is to be commended for embracing WCM as a way of life," said Harlow. "Together with the support and involvement of our UAW partners, we will ensure that the company meets its long-term business goals and provides a secure future for all employees."

WCM was first implemented by Fiat in 2006 and introduced to Chrysler Group as part of the alliance between the two companies in June 2009. The methodology engages the employees to provide and implement suggestions on how to improve their jobs and their plants, promoting a strong sense of ownership.

Plants awarded for their efforts also have a role in accelerating the implementation of WCM throughout the organization as coaches and mentors.

During an audit, zero to five points are awarded for each of the 10 technical pillars, which include safety, workplace organization, logistics and the environment, and for each of the 10 managerial pillars, such as management commitment, clarity of objectives, allocation of people, motivation of operators and commitment of the organization. A score of 85 would indicate World Class.

Currently, there are three North American plants at a silver status, having been elevated from bronze after receiving a minimum of 60 points during an audit.

Silver is awarded to plants that have taken a preventative approach to implementing the WCM methodology throughout the facility.

The silver plants are Windsor (Ont.) Assembly awarded in March 2014; Dundee (Mich.) Engine recognized in May 2015; and Toledo (Ohio) Assembly Complex designated in May 2016.

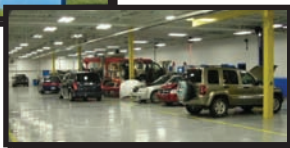
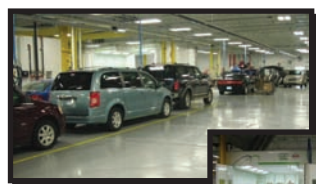
According to Fiat Chrysler, Warren Truck Assembly – located on Mound Road, takes up 86.6 acres and employs 4,463 people. It manufactures the Ram 1500 Quad and Crew Cab.



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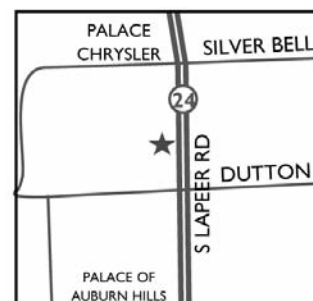


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New 2017 Ford Fusion's Design is Tech-Friendly

As consumers look for new ways to tap into the ever-growing digital world, the number of people using multiple digital devices on a regular basis has grown.

In response, Ford has redesigned the interior of its 2017 Ford Fusion to offer drivers and passengers more storage, increased connectivity, and an open, airier feel throughout, said Ford spokesman Dan Jones.

"People love the look and feel of Fusion, but there are always things we can do to make it better," said Kelly Whetstone, Ford vehicle architecture supervisor for Fusion. "So we looked at customer feedback, and then we honed in on the storage capability of the car."

Roughly one in three Americans, Jones said, own a smartphone, a computer and a tablet – a 140 percent increase over the last three years, according to Pew Research Center.

Among U.S. adults today, 68 percent have a smartphone, up from 35 percent in 2011, while tablet computer ownership has edged up from 3 percent to 45 percent. Research also finds some 14 percent own a portable gaming device, while around 19 percent have e-book readers.

To accommodate all of these devices, Jones said Ford engineered 59 percent more storage into the Fusion console, adding easy-to-reach bins throughout, including a new phone pocket and area for coins. To provide a 4-liter increase to the main console storage area, the armrest has been lengthened about 3 inches, and a clamshell design has been incorporated for the upper compartment to make the space more accessible and user friendly.

The revamped media bin at the front of the console, under the 8-inch touch screen, sees the addition of a lighted USB port for increased connectivity on the forward wall. A narrow new storage slot behind it is perfect for a cellphone and other small items, Jones said.

The rearrangement provides room for more efficiently designed cord storage space, so cords don't tangle, droop or snag. The new USB port allows for easier phone connection, so customers can enjoy the full functionality of SYNC 3 and AppLink.

A sleek rotary gear shift dial replaces the traditional shifter found in previous models. The new shifter serves both form and function, says Hani Badawi, Ford Fusion ergonomics engineer. Not only is its less intrusive form aesthetically pleasing, the design frees up valuable real estate on the console.

"Without the larger base of the traditional shifter, there was much more room for us to add features that are important to the Fusion customer, like storage and connections," says Badawi.

"We were able to shuffle around the driver-assist controls to the base of the shifter, along with the electronic brake, for a more intuitive arrangement for the customer, as well as providing a longer armrest for significantly improved elbow comfort for drivers."

The change in size and placement of the shifter also allowed the cupholders to be repositioned, Whetstone said. Previously side by side in the middle of the console, they now sit fore and aft – closer to the passenger side.



Ford's pedestrian-assist technology is here today and already has proven it can save lives.

Ford Taking Human Error Out of Driving

Human error, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, accounts for more than 94 percent of vehicle accidents.

And, said Ford spokesman Dan Jones, collisions can be caused not just by distracted driving, but, increasingly, distracted walking. Every eight minutes, a pedestrian is injured in a motor vehicle crash, according to a recent report from NHTSA. This rise is linked to a global influx of "petextrians" – people walking while texting.

Ford's new Pre-Collision Assist with Pedestrian Detection can predict the movement of pedestrians to help reduce the severity of – and, in some cases, eliminate – frontal collisions altogether.

Debuting in North America as an available technology for the 2017 Ford Fusion, the system has been developed to help recognize pedestrians using more than 240 terabytes of test data – equal to 20.4 trillion books, or 600 Libraries of Congress with 34 million books each.

"Since we are trying to avoid a collision that hasn't happened yet, prediction of the future is an inherent part of the puzzle," said Scott Lindstrom, Ford driver assist technologies manager. "Having a huge cache of data – based on real-world driving conditions – helps our system be smart enough to determine what may happen in a second that has not yet even occurred."

Cities around the world are tackling the increasing problem of "petextrians" and distracted walking. A theme park in Chongqing, China, painted smartphone lanes on 30 meters of sidewalk in an effort to combat the problem. And officials in Seoul plan to expand similar signage across South Korea next year. Pedestrians crossing the tram tracks in Augsburg, Germany, are now warned by a strip of blinking red LED lights mounted on the ground. The tiny town of Rexburg, Idaho, took a different approach, passing a law in 2011 against texting while crossing the street and slapping a \$50 fine on anyone who does.

Ford Pre-Collision Assist with Pedestrian Detection uses combined radar and camera technology to scan the roadway ahead for collision risks. If one is detected, the initial response from the vehicle is to provide a visual and audible warning to the driver and temporarily mute the audio system. If the driver doesn't react to the warning, the technology can automatically apply up to the vehicle's full braking force to help reduce the severity of, or even eliminate, a frontal collision.

Aaron Mills, Ford safety engineer, says the more test data was gathered and then used to develop the vehicle's algorithm to help it recognize a wide variety of human sizes and shapes. "We were startled to see how obli-

ous people could be of a 4,000-pound car coming toward them," he said. "It was a real eye-opener to how distracted people are today."

Working in daylight and clear weather conditions at speeds up to 50 mph, Ford's system processes information collected from a windshield-mounted camera, which has been taught to classify different vehicle and pedestrian scenarios, along with radar near the bumper to pick up shape reflections.

The technology then combines both data streams using a unique Ford algorithm that calculates the risk of a collision. While the system may be especially helpful in unexpected situations, it does not replace the driver.

Ford is testing advanced features for future vehicles that could allow the system to operate at night, in low and harsh lighting conditions, and when vehicles and cyclists move in different directions.

Using 12 vehicles, Ford conducted 500,000-plus miles of development testing in Europe, China and the United States, racking up more than one year – 473 days – of data logging.

In just 15 weeks in North America alone, the technology recorded more than 3 million scans of roadside objects, vehicles and pedestrians across roughly 70 percent non-highway and 30 percent highway miles.

Other driver-assist technologies available for Fusion include lane-keeping assist, Blind Spot Information System with cross-traffic alert, adaptive cruise control, and hands-free parallel and perpendicular parking.

Karmanos Invests In Pontiac Plan to Revive Downtown

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) – Businessman and Hockey Hall of Fame member Peter Karmanos is hoping to boost efforts to revive downtown Pontiac with new investments.

The *Detroit Free Press* reports the chairman and co-founder of MadDog Technology announced Oct. 27, along with co-founder Mark Hillman, that they're moving three of their companies to the historic Riker Building in the Michigan city.

Karmanos said that they "see Pontiac emerging as a technology center in southeast Michigan."

The newspaper said the companies will occupy a 15,000-square-foot space and plan to hire more than 100 professionals to work there over the next three years.

Karmanos co-founded software development company Compuware and in 2003 helped bolster Detroit's revival efforts by moving the company's headquarters into a new building in downtown Detroit.

Karmanos also owns the NHL's Carolina Hurricanes.

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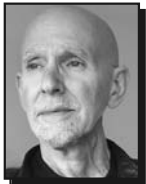
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Camaro Blazes New European Track Time

There's fast and then there's Nürburgring Nordschleife fast, and the 2017 Camaro ZL1 has proven just how fast it is.

Chevrolet unleashed a time-attack video of the 2017 Camaro ZL1 lapping Germany's Nürburgring Nordschleife in a fast 7:29.6 on Oct. 24.

According to the Nürburgring Nordschleife Web site listing of top 100 lap times, the Camaro's time is 30th, just behind the time of the Porsche Carrera GT's 7:28.71 and ahead of the Mercedes SLS AMG GT's time of 7:30.0.

The new ZL1's lap time is 11.67 seconds quicker than the previous ZL1's fast lap, said GM spokesman Ron Kiino.

"To be almost 12 seconds quicker than the 5th-Generation ZL1 is a testament to the advanced design and technology of the new ZL1," said Al Oppenheiser, Camaro chief engineer. "From the improved aerodynamics, mass reduction and 650-horsepower LT4 to the Magnetic Ride Control, electronic limited-slip differential and Custom Launch Control, the ZL1 was designed to take on the world's most challenging track, making it right at home on any track, road or drag strip anywhere."

The only changes made to the ZL1 were the installation of data acquisition equipment, a roll hoop and Sparco racing seats with six-point harnesses.

Otherwise, the car was production stock and included the following:

- New 10R90 10-speed automatic transmission (set to Track mode to enable Performance Algorithm Shift calibration, providing optimal gear selection without the need to manually select gears during driving).



2017 Camaro ZL1 laps Nürburgring Nordschleife road course in 7:29.60.

- Brembo brakes with front 15.4-inch rotors and six-piston calipers and rear 14.4-inch rotors and four-piston calipers.
- 6.2-liter supercharged LT4 V8 making 650 horsepower and 650 lb.-ft. of torque.
- FE4 Suspension with Magnetic Ride Control.
- Performance Traction Management.
- Forged 20-inch wheels with Goodyear Eagle F1 Supercar 3 tires.
- Lift-reducing front fascia elements with cooling ducts and Chevrolet "flowtie."
- Full underbody shielding.
- ZL1-specific rear spoiler and diffuser.
- 11 heat exchangers.

"Many fast laps around the Nordschleife are dramatic, with lots of oversteer and steering input," said Drew Cattell, Camaro ride and handling engineer and driver of the hot lap. "Not so with the ZL1, which is extremely planted and stable, almost calm. With Magnetic Ride and great overall chassis balance, the ZL1 is all about being inch-perfect at every turn and carrying a lot of speed."

Questions Arise Over New Self-Driving Technology

by DEE-ANN DURBIN and TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writers

DETROIT (AP) – Self-driving cars hold the promise of saving thousands of lives each year on U.S. roads. But does pointing out flaws with the technology effectively put people in danger?

That claim was put forth Oct. 20 by Tesla Motors CEO Elon Musk, who criticized the media for harping on the relatively few crashes involving Tesla's semi-autonomous driving system called Autopilot, while saying little about the 1.2 million people who die worldwide each year in human-driven vehicles.

"If, in writing some article that's negative, you effectively dissuade people from using autonomous vehicles, you're killing people," said Musk, who expects his self-driving technology to be at least twice as safe as cars driven by humans.

The comments came as Musk announced that all new Tesla vehicles – including the lower-cost Model 3 – will have the hardware needed to drive themselves. The talk is bold but experts say it's premature until self-driving cars prove they're better drivers than humans under any circumstances.

"Over time, after the technology has established itself, one would expect there would be a decrease in fatalities," says Raj Rajkumar, a computer engineering professor at Carnegie Mellon University who leads its autonomous vehicle research. "But this is too premature to make this claim. Tesla's technology is known to be imperfect."

In May, an Ohio man using Autopilot died when his Tesla Model S failed to spot a tractor-trailer crossing a divided highway. Neither the car nor the driver braked, and the Model S crashed into the side of the trailer. Federal investigators are looking into Autopilot's role in the crash.

There is evidence, however, that one day Musk could be proven to be right. While currently there is little data showing that fully autonomous cars would reduce deaths, there are studies that show computer controls can cut fatalities. The Insurance

Institute for Highway Safety said it determined from 2016 police data that forward collision warning alone reduced front-into-rear crashes by 27 percent. Automatic braking cut the rear crashes in half and reduced injuries by almost 60 percent.

Tesla's Autopilot, introduced last year, can maintain a set speed and distance and keep the car in its lane. But the technology works mainly on highways and must be monitored by the driver. Autopilot will turn itself off if drivers have their hands off the wheel for too long.

Musk says Autopilot has already shown itself to be safer than humans. He tweeted earlier this month that Tesla vehicles have been driven 222 million miles in Autopilot mode, with one confirmed driver death. By comparison, the U.S. fatality rate in 2014 was 2.16 deaths per 200 million miles traveled, according to government data.

The new autonomous system has been in testing for more than a year, and Musk said last week it could cut worldwide deaths in half if all cars used it.

Rajkumar was skeptical and called the Tesla announcement "marketing hype." He said people should be skeptical of Tesla's claims because of the Florida crash. Self-driving technology "still needs to prove itself," he said, adding that it has trouble operating in dense urban traffic and inclement weather.

Consumer Reports magazine also is concerned about semi-autonomous systems such as those that allow a car to steer itself. The magazine believes automakers like Tesla "should take stronger steps to ensure that vehicles with these systems are designed, deployed, and marketed safely," it said in a statement.

One criticism of Autopilot is that the system gives drivers a false sense of security, causing them to be distracted and unprepared to take control in an emergency. The German government has told Tesla to stop using the Autopilot name because it implies that cars can drive themselves.

Musk disagrees, saying the term has been used in aviation to describe a system that assists pilots.

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New Stryker Carrier to Give Soldiers Unfair Advantage

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Gen. Daniel B. Allyn, the Army's vice chief of staff.

"This environment will place a premium on unmanned systems, lethal technologies, and rapid maneuver capabilities that this Stryker system exemplifies."

The new Stryker is a refit of the older Stryker ECP. It will be getting a 450 hp engine, improved power pack thermal management, suspension upgrades and improved lethality with the addition of a 30 mm gun, Dean said, while still maintaining the ability to transport a nine-man squad.

Additionally, the base vehicle and weapons systems can easily be upgraded to include additional capabilities.

The refitting process, Dean said, will begin at the Army's Anniston, Ala., facility.

The refurbishing and refitting is part of a joint government/General Dynamics project. The Strykers will be stripped and then sent to the Army's Joint Systems Manufacturing Center in Lima, Ohio.

Once there, they will be refitted and sent to the GDLS facility in Sterling Heights, where employees will add the wheels, suspension system, new turrets and gun.

The whole process should be completed no later than Dec. 31 of this year, Dean said.

Once all that work is done, the vehicles will be tested and finally sent to Europe where they will be manned by the Army's Second Calvary Regiment in Germany.

Overall, more than 4,000 Strykers will be refitted and improved, Dean said.

Bassett said the development of the new Stryker was done in a very short period of time.

The call for a new vehicle went out in July of 2015 and the first prototype was unveiled on Oct. 27.

"This is not a sport for the faint of heart," Bassett said. "This work was done by professional engineers who brought their A game every day."

GM Enjoys Strong Quarter

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

September in the U.S., GM's most lucrative market, and market share dropping almost a full percentage point year-over-year to 16.9 percent. And it came despite worries about increased competition in the U.S. with automakers fighting over a slightly smaller pie.

Sales have hit a post-recession plateau after last year's record of 17.5 million.

But at GM, revenue rose 10 percent over a year ago largely because it's getting stronger prices for cars and trucks in North America. Pickup sales are still healthy, and the company rolled out strong new vehicles such as the Chevrolet Malibu midsize car and the Cadillac XT5 SUV, Stevens said.

Although overall sales dropped, Stevens said GM raised its U.S. share of the more profitable retail sales to individual buyers by 0.5 percentage points. He expects pickup sales to remain strong but says the company will balance supply and demand.

It all fueled a record North American pretax profit of \$3.5 billion, giving the region an 11.2 percent profit margin. The margin is the percent of revenue that the company gets to keep.

Stevens said prospects are good, too, because GM is rolling out important new vehicles. "We're entering the heart of our

Gary L. Whited, president of General Dynamics Land Systems, said getting the new Stryker project done so quickly was like bending steel and was a miracle of military acquisition.

Gen. Daniel B. Allyn, vice chief of staff for the U.S. Army, said that the Army has 180,000 soldiers based around the world in 140 locations.

"We are a busy army that must maintain a relentless pace," Allyn said. "We in the U.S. Army have thought long and hard about the future."

"The battlefield of tomorrow will be complex and often in an urban setting. Fighting in such an environment will require leaders of character capable of being agile. A premium will be placed on unmanned systems and rapid maneuver."

That's where the new Stryker comes in, Allyn said.

It will still be able to move troops around while providing excellent firepower to back them up.

The new Stryker, Allyn said, was in response to a review of Army needs after the Russians invaded the Ukraine.

He said that while the U.S. was occupied in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Russians upgraded their capabilities, and their military actions in the Ukraine showed just what they could do.

One of the Army's responses was to order a new Stryker vehicle for its soldiers.

"This upgrade to support dismounted troops without hurting the maneuverability of the vehicle is quite an accomplishment," Allyn said. "It was done through leadership and teamwork. And it was delivered in near record time."

He said the United States Army never wants to get into a fair fight, and the new Stryker is helping them maintain that objective.

Among the guests at the unveiling were Michigan Senator Debbie Stabenow and U.S. Congressman Sander Levin, whose district is home to GDLS.

product launch cadence," he said, adding that within the next 18 months, GM will replace its compact and midsize crossover SUVs in the hottest part of the U.S. market.

Excluding a 4-cent benefit from an unspecified ignition-switch recall recovery, GM earned \$1.72 per share. That soundly beat Wall Street estimates of \$1.46 per share.

"...on track to deliver higher profit, higher margins."

—Chuck Stevens, GM CFO

Jefferies analyst Philippe Houchois said he's concerned that the company pulled fourth-quarter sales forward. He has a "Hold" rating on the stock with a \$33 one-year price target on concerns that sales have peaked in North America.

GM also said it completed a \$5 billion stock buyback a quarter early during the July-through-September period. Stevens said the company will start on its second tranche of buybacks worth \$4 billion in the fourth quarter.

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Tesla Surprises World by Making Profit

DETROIT (AP) – Electric car maker Tesla Motors posted its first quarterly profit in three years on Oct. 26, giving investors reason to cheer after months of doubt.

Tesla's shares have fallen since the summer as some investors questioned the company's proposed merger with solar panel maker SolarCity Corp. Goldman Sachs recently downgraded Tesla's shares from "buy" to "neutral" and lowered its price target, saying the potential merger could delay the release of Tesla's much-anticipated Model 3.

But Tesla CEO Elon Musk said in a letter to investors that the third quarter showed Tesla could meet its goals while keeping one eye on opportunities for future growth.

Musk also reiterated that Tesla shouldn't need to raise cash to support the Model 3, and doesn't expect a capital raise through the first quarter of next year.

There had been some questions about the company's ability to proceed without raising more money, but Tesla ended the quarter with positive free cash flow of \$176 million.

"Things are looking good," Musk said in a conference call with analysts and media. "It's not to say there could be some darkness ahead . . . (but) it's overall looking quite promising."

Tesla reported net income of \$21.9 million, or 14 cents per share, up from a loss of \$229.9 million in last year's July-September period.

Revenue more than doubled to \$2.3 billion. That included \$149.7 million in non-automotive revenue – up 78 percent from last year – in part because of growth in Tesla's energy-storage business.

Tesla, which went public in 2010, has had only one other profitable quarter – the first quarter of 2013. But the company said it expects to report net income in the fourth quarter of this year.

Tesla delivered 24,821 vehicles during the quarter, an increase of 72 percent over the same period last year.

The Palo Alto, Calif.-based company said it still expects to deliver just under 80,000 vehicles worldwide this year.

That sales number is up from the 50,500 delivered in the year 2015.

Oakland County Declines Palace Purchase Plan

AUBURN HILLS, Mich. (AP) – Suburban Detroit officials say they rejected a \$384 million offer in June to buy the Palace of Auburn Hills.

Oakland County said in a statement Oct. 24 to *The Detroit News* it was "acting in a fiscally responsible manner on behalf of taxpayers" when it rejected the proposal.

If Oakland County had decided to make the purchase, it would have allowed the home of the Detroit Pistons to be leased back to the team.

County Executive L. Brooks Patterson told WWJ-AM he was "not real happy" with the risk of owning a stadium "and not owning the team."

The Palace and Pistons are both owned by Tom Gores' Platinum Equity group.

There has been talk for some time about the possibility of the Pistons moving from Auburn Hills to downtown Detroit.

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