



Kayla McDonell shows off her lighting design work on the Cruze.

## Work of Young GM Engineer Attracts National Attention

by Jim Stickford

Kayla McDonell, 26, was recently named as one of *Forbes'* magazine's "30 Under 30" in the manufacturing and engineering category for 2017.

Every year *Forbes* honors 600 people under the age of 30 in a variety of different business categories. This year the magazine honored McDonell, a design relief engineer for Exterior Lighting a GM. She works in the VEC building at the Tech Center in Warren.

"I've worked for GM for just over two years," McDonell said. "I went to Kettering University in Flint where I majored in mechanical engineering, which might be considered unusual because I don't actually come from an automobile family. I'm the first one who's gone into the car business."

McDonell said most of her family works for the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol. Her father Ron is a store manager for Home Depot.

"I grew up in Davison, which is near Flint," McDonell said. "My father is a huge influence on me. He saw how good I was in math and science and urged me to consider being an engineer. Back in high school, I didn't even know what an engineer was. But because I lived so close to Kettering, they reached out to me and I had the chance to visit the campus for a weekend. Dad said I should go, not in a forceful way. He said it would be a great experience, so I attended a workshop, and from that moment on, I fell in love with engineering."

McDonell studied at Kettering beginning in July of 2008 and graduated in September of 2012. Her first job out of school was at

the auto supplier Calsonic Kansei in Farmington Hills, where she worked as a project engineer helping develop instrument panels for Nissan vehicles. The job required her to work with designers.

"I was the engineer on the project," McDonell said. "I helped with any issues of design and worked on developing a potential manufacturing process. I took a couple of design classes as part of my engineering requirements, but I was

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2017 Ram 1500



2016 Chevrolet Cruze



2017 Ford Expedition

## January Auto Sales Indicate a Slower Market for 2017

### Chrysler Monthly Truck Sales Rise Amidst Decline

Fiat Chrysler reported U.S. sales of 152,218 units, an 11 percent decrease compared with sales in January 2016 (171,352 units), said Fiat Chrysler spokesman Ralph Kisiel.

In January, fleet sales of 42,868 units were down 31 percent year

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### GM Enjoys Strong Transaction Prices

General Motors U.S. dealers delivered 195,909 cars, trucks and crossovers in January, down 3.8 percent year over year, said GM spokesman Jim Cain. Retail sales totaled 155,010 units, down 4.9 percent, but the good news was that the company set a new January record for average transaction prices.

"In early January, we focused on profitability while key competitors sold down their large stocks of deeply discounted, old-

model-year pickups," said Kurt McNeil, U.S. vice president of Sales Operations. "We gained considerable sales momentum as we rebuilt our mid-size pickup, SUV and compact crossover inventories from very low levels following record-setting December sales."

Inventories of most of these products were in the 30 - 50 days' supply range at the beginning of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

### Ford Reporting Strong Retail Monthly Sales

Ford Motor Company's U.S. retail sales of 120,400 vehicles are up 6 percent in January, while total sales declined 1 percent, said Ford spokesman Erich Merkle.

Fleet sales of 52,212 vehicles, including daily rental, commercial and government segments,

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## China Looks to Play Big Role in EV Market

by Jim Stickford

The Automotive Press Association held a timely talk about the state of the Chinese auto industry on Feb. 2 at the Detroit Athletic Club.

The talk - A Deep Dive into the Chinese Automotive Market - was given by Michael Dunne, author of the book "American Wheels, Chinese Roads" was followed up by a question and answer session with Dunne, Jerry Xu, president of the Detroit Chi-

nese Business Association; and Mary Buckzeiger, CEO of Sure Solutions and Lucerne International.

Dunne received his MBA from the university of Michigan and has spent considerable time in China and other Asian countries.

He began by pointing out that the biggest mass migration of human beings on any given year takes place in China, when people go to their home towns to celebrate the Chinese New Year.

He said they crowd train sta-

tions and use sharp elbows to get space.

"That's what they do for fun on their vacations," Dunne said.

The lesson he learned was that when it come to business, the Chinese are even more serious.

"They never give up," Dunne said.

That attitude shows just how China has been able to develop its economy quickly, Dunne said. From 1949 to 1976, the leader

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Michael Dunne speaks on the development of the Chinese auto industry.

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### Macomb Walk Raising Money for Heating

It's time to commit to those New Year fitness resolutions and take a walk – literally.

Macomb County will be hosting its 27th Annual Walk for Warmth Event on Saturday, Feb. 18 at Macomb Mall. Registration is at 8 a.m. and the event begins at 9 a.m.

It's a 5k outdoor run/indoor walk that raises money to assist low-income residents with heat-related emergencies, such as paying utility bills or replacing a broken furnace. All of the event proceeds benefit Macomb County residents.

Registrants can choose to participate in a 5K competitive run or in the family fun walk at Macomb Mall. For more information and to register, visit [www.mca.macombgov.org](http://www.mca.macombgov.org).

# China's Automotive Future is Developing High Tech Cars

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

was Mao and he preached independence. That kept China poor. But beginning in 1980, the economic policy became “take the best from the rest of the world” and keep China in charge of its own destiny. The result, Dunne said, was perhaps the greatest economic growth in history.

Chinese development can be broken down into three phases, Dunne said. The first phase was between 1980 and 2000. Foreign companies had all the leverage because of a lack of automotive manufacturing know-how in China. Companies set up shop and built factories.

But each factory was co-owned by the foreign OEM and Chinese partner.

The second phase was between 2000 and 2010. The Chinese companies now began partnering with multiple OEMs. So the company partnered with Buick also partnered with VW.

The third phase started in 2010 and should end around 2020, Dunne said. China is now the largest car market in the world, and we might see a number of foreign OEMs being invited to sell their half of the company to their Chinese partners.

One trend Dunne has noticed is that Chinese companies are getting big into high-end automotive technology. Firms have opened up in Silicon Valley to develop the latest in EV and autonomous technology. A subver-

sion of the notion that Chinese industry is based on cheap manufacturing.

Companies like Faraday have entered into the total-EV market and within two-and-a-half years produced a vehicle designed to rival Tesla, Dunne said.

China is investing big in EV technology for a couple of reasons, Dunne said. First that's the future of the auto industry. And second, the country has terrible emissions problems and building clean cars is one solution.

While the country has become the largest importer of oil from the Mideast, Dunne said China doesn't want to get bogged down in the political situation in that part of the world and it wants to avoid developing what it sees as America's addiction to Mideast oil. EV technology can help with that problem as well.

He also said he expects Chinese imports to gradually enter the U.S. market, and with companies like LYNK & CO. to try the Tesla direct sales method.

And finally, Dunne said, he expects China to begin investing directly in the U.S., with money being their ultimate weapon.

“They will be investing money in manufacturing and high-end autonomous vehicles,” Dunne said. “That's the future I see and it should ultimately be good for the United States. We have to be careful because the two proud cultures don't always get along. But I believe they will bring money and build where they intend to sell.”

Dunne then sat down with Xu and Buchzeiger to answer questions from people in the audience.

The first question was about pressure to raise wages in Chinese manufacturing.

Dunne said that in fact wages have risen in the coastal cities,

which has driven manufacturing into China's interior. The coastal cities are already beginning to see a shift into a service economy.

Buchzeiger agreed and added that her firms have been in China for 12 years and she's seen a shift from just manufacturing to more of development of technology.

The next question was whether Chinese businesses would invest in places like Michigan and create jobs, and what could prevent them from being successful.

Xu said that Dunne was right when he talked about cultural differences. Businesses are already here, but to succeed they must tap local talent, people who know how things work here.

All too often, Xu said, successful Chinese businessmen come here thinking they're invincible, and they're not. Things are done

differently here and that must be taken into account for any business plan to succeed.

Another question dealt with the recent change in the U.S. presidency. Xu said that things are always different when a new president takes over. Things usually find an equilibrium after a year.

Dunne said, when asked, he would tell Trump that the Chinese respect strength and that any business arrangements should be built on the principle of reciprocity.

Currently Chinese businesses can operate in the U.S. on their own, while American businesses have to have Chinese partners to operate in China. That should change.

Dunne would tell Trump that if China wants to do business here, the rules will have to be the same for everyone.

## Chrysler Sees January Sales Decline

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over year as Fiat Chrysler continues its strategy of reducing its sales to the daily rental segment, Kisiel said. Fleet sales represented 28 percent of total Fiat Chrysler sales in January. The company's retail sales of 109,350 units were flat for the month, and represented 72 percent of total January sales.

Ram Truck brand sales increased 5 percent in January, compared with the same month a year ago, as the pickup truck posted a 4 percent sales gain, Kisiel said. Three Jeep brand models recorded increases in January, led by a 52 percent increase in Jeep Renegade sales. Sales of the Jeep Grand Cherokee, the brand's volume leader in January, were up 24 percent for the month. Sales of the Dodge

Journey mid-size crossover were up 9 percent, while Fiat 500 sales grew 24 percent year over year.

Sales of the Ram pickup truck increased 4 percent in January, compared with the same month in 2016. In addition, the Ram Pro-Master van turned in a strong 43 percent sales gain. So Ram Truck brand sales were up 5 percent year over year in January.

Three Jeep brand models posted sales increases in January, led by the Jeep Renegade and its 52 percent year-over-year sales gain, Kisiel said. The Jeep Grand Cherokee – the brand's volume leader for the month – recorded a 24 percent sales increase in January. The Jeep Wrangler logged a January increase too.

The Fiat 500 recorded a 24 percent sales increase in January compared with the same month a year ago, Kisiel said.

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GM recently bought back the CERV 1, which was created in the 1950s.

## GM Reclaims A Piece of Engineering Past

A piece of GM's history has rejoined the company.

General Motors, last week, bought the Chevrolet Engineering Research Vehicle (CERV) 1 for \$1.3 million at the Barrett-Jackson Auto Auction in Scottsdale, Ariz.

The car was listed as Lot #1390 on the auction's Web site. Its description called it one "of the most important pieces of American automotive history, the Chevrolet Engineering Research Vehicle (CERV) 1 was developed between 1959 and 1960 by Zora Arkus-Duntov as a functional mid-engine, open-wheel, single-seat prototype racing car.

"It served as Duntov's personal Corvette engineering test bed; a platform for engineers to develop and refine the Chevrolet body, chassis and suspension systems. Duntov drove the CERV 1 in demo laps at the U.S. Grand Prix in 1960, but that is as far as its racing aspirations went, due to the ban on manufacturer-sponsored racing at the time.

"The car was designed by Larry Shinoda and Tony Lapine, and was originally equipped with a 283ci/350hp small-block V8 weighing only 350 lbs because of the use of aluminum and magnesium engine components. The

CERV 1 features a four-wheel independent suspension, 4-speed manual transmission, and front disc and rear drum brakes. The steering system features a high-efficiency recirculating-ball-type steering gear of 12:1 ratio; overall steering ratio is a very fast 13.5:1.

"Fuel is delivered via two rubber bladder fuel cells with a total capacity of 20 gallons. Fuel-injected small-block technology was developed using this incredible car. Later, for even greater performance, Duntov refitted the

CERV 1 with a 377ci aluminum small block, an advanced Rochester fuel-injection system, and Indy-style tires and wheels. Shinoda also redesigned the body structure for greater aerodynamics, and the car recorded a top speed of 206 mph."

*Hemmings Magazine* said in 1972 GM gave the vehicle to Briggs Cunningham Museum, and it was in the collections of Miles Collier and Mike Yager before being sold at Barrett-Jackson. It will be in GM's Heritage Center.

## Work of Young GM Engineer Attracts National Attention

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trained as a mechanical engineer. I learned a lot about design in this process."

McDonnell then went to Mubua in Auburn Hills, a suspension component supplier.

"I was young and not afraid to try out different jobs," McDonnell said. "There wasn't much work for me at the time, and a recruiter reached out to me and said there was a contract position at GM that I might like."

McDonnell said that she hesitated to take the interview because she had heard contract employee horror stories and really wanted to be a direct hire.

"I wanted some interview experience, so I decided to go to the interview," McDonnell said. "I was offered a job even before I was able to leave the parking lot. I didn't know if I should take the job and called my father. He said I should take a chance on myself and show GM just what I could do and how talented I was."

And that's what she did. Within a couple of weeks, she was offered a direct hire position and ended up being a contract employee for only about six weeks.

Her first job was working on the exterior lights on the new Chevy Cruze. It's a vehicle that is sold all over the world and there are different rules in place in different countries governing lighting.

"We sell the Cruze in China, Korea, South America and Germany," McDonnell said. "The front of the Cruze is the same here and at those locations, so I've worked with engineers and designers from all over the world to make the lighting work."

What's exciting about working for GM today is that engineers and designers can do so many things with exterior lighting now that they couldn't do 10 or 15 years ago, McDonnell said. With LED technology exterior lights are smaller, yet brighter. They don't heat up the way incandescent lights do, so engineers and designers do not have to worry about heat sinks. This allows vehicles to have a little more personality, looks-wise, and they're smaller which make them easier to package.

"This allows designers to be more creative with looks," McDonnell said. "You can give a vehicle a lot of character."

McDonnell said that she was surprised to learn that an anonymous person nominated her to be one of *Forbes'* 30 Under 30.

"I first heard about the award back in November," McDonnell said. "It happened to be on a day off. My husband Josh and I were going to a concert when I was notified that I had been nominated. I don't know who nominated me,

only that it's someone at GM. I filled out some paperwork from *Forbes* and forwarded it to them on the week of Dec. 23. I left for my Christmas break and checked my email every day. I heard on Jan. 3 that I was chosen as one of the 30 Under 30 in manufacturing and engineering."

Every year all the *Forbes* winners attend a summit. Last year's was in Boston. This year's summit hasn't been set yet.

"The summit is really a huge conference," McDonnell said. "They have music and the chance to meet all of the other winners. And there are people who are successful in different fields who come and speak."

McDonnell said she's proud of what she's done at GM, especially the work that went into the successful launch of the Cruze. She would next like to transition into a people leader position.

"There's so much I want to do at GM," McDonnell said. "There are so many opportunities."

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## General Motors and Honda Building Hydrogen Facility

have been reduced dramatically and a fully cross-functional team is developing advanced manufacturing processes simultaneously with advances in the design," said Charlie Freese, GM executive director of Global Fuel Cell Business.

"The result is a lower-cost system that is a fraction of the size and mass."

Honda began delivery of its all-new Clarity Fuel Cell vehicle to U.S. customers in December 2016 following a spring 2016 launch in Japan.

The Clarity Fuel Cell received the best driving range rating from the Environmental Protection Agency of any electric vehicle without a combustion engine with a range rating of 366 miles and fuel economy rating of 68 miles per gallon of gasoline-equivalent combined, Adler said.

"The expertise Honda has established that led to creation of the first-generation Clarity fuel cell system is valuable experience that we are leveraging in the joint development of the next-generation fuel cell system with GM," said Takashi Sekiguchi, managing officer and director and chief operating officer of Automotive Operations, Honda Motor Co., Ltd. "Our collaboration is an opportunity to further utilize the strengths of each company to popularize fuel cell vehicles at the earliest possible time."

GM and Honda collaborated in a powertrain cross-supply arrangement in 1999 under which Honda manufactured 50,000 V6 engines for the Saturn VUE and Honda received diesel engines from General Motor's Isuzu affiliate for use in Europe, Adler said.

fuel cells closer to the mainstream of propulsion applications," said Mark Reuss, GM executive vice president, Global Product Development, Purchasing and Supply Chain. "The eventual deployment of this technology in passenger vehicles will create more differentiated and environmentally friendly transportation options for consumers."

Fuel cell technology addresses many of the major challenges facing automobiles today: petroleum dependency, emissions, efficiency, range and refueling times. Fuel cell vehicles can operate on hydrogen made from renewable sources such as wind and biomass. Water vapor is the only emission from fuel cell vehicles.

In addition to advancing the performance of the fuel cell system, General Motors and Honda are working together to reduce the cost of development and manufacturing through economies of scale and common sourcing, Adler said.

The two companies also continue to work with governments and other stakeholders to further advance the refueling infrastructure that is critical for the long-term viability and consumer acceptance of fuel cell vehicles.

GM is currently demonstrating the capability of fuel cells across a range of land, sea and air applications. The company has accumulated millions of miles of real-world driving in fuel cell vehicles.

“With the next-generation fuel cell system, GM and Honda are making a dramatic step toward lower cost, higher-volume fuel cell systems. Precious metals

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# GM Has Strong Sale Prices

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

January, Cain said. January High-lights (vs. Jan. 2016) include:

- GM's Average Transaction Prices (ATP), which prices after incentives, rose \$1,200 per unit to \$34,500, a new January record.
- GM was the only domestic automaker and one of only two full-line automakers to reduce incentives as a percentage of ATP. GM spending was 12.7 percent, down 0.3 points, and the industry average was 12.3 percent, up 1.3 points.
- Rental deliveries were down 1 percent. GM's fleet mix was 21 percent of total sales.
- Chevrolet retail sales also showed some good news, Cain said. The Cruze, up 22 percent, the Volt, up 56 percent, and the Trax, up 40 percent, had their best-ever January retail sales. Total sales were also January records. Spark deliveries were up 40 percent.

As for Buick retail sales, crossover deliveries were up 20 percent, driven by higher Encore sales and the first-ever Envision, Cain said. The average transac-

tion prices were up 9 percent, four times better than the industry average growth.

Looking at GMC retail sales, Cain said deliveries of the Acadia were up 15 percent. Sierra deliveries were up 2 percent, for the truck's best retail January sales since 2002.

Cadillac sales were up more than 1 percent, Cain said. Crossover deliveries were up 11 percent, on the strength of the new XT5.

Average transaction prices were the highest in the brand's history at \$55,300, up about \$1,000 year over year.

"Our go-to-market strategy in 2017 is the same as 2016," McNeil said. "We are focused on strengthening our brands, growing retail sales and share, reducing daily rental deliveries and maintaining our operating discipline."

GM is optimistic about the year ahead because the economy is strong and the company's four brands are expanding their product offerings in fast-growing crossover segments, McNeil said.

## Ford's Sales Strategy is Paying Off

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

declined 13 percent. The fleet decline reflects a strong year-ago comparison, with fleet customer orders front-loaded at the beginning of 2016.

"We estimate the overall industry at retail was down slightly. We were up 6 percent, and growing by 6 percent, while also driving near record average transaction prices for Ford, which were up \$2,500 versus year ago and far out pacing the overall industry in January of \$550, that's a pretty impressive accomplishment," Merkle said.

Ford F-Series sales totaled 57,995 trucks last month, a 13 percent increase, supported by strong retail gains from both F-150 and Super Duty. F-Series was up 19 percent at retail, with gains in every region.

January represents the best sales start for F-Series since 2004.

"That just reflects the strong demand for high series product, the very high-end Lariat, King Ranch and Platinum have a strong demand for those vehicles and all the new technology that we're incorporating into the product," Merkle said.



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/MONTH

39 MONTH/10K PER YEAR  
\$3,779 DUE AT SIGNING AFTER ALL OFFERS

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/MONTH

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Was \$22,795

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Was \$32,745 **Sale Price: \$30,121\***

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Stock# H32110

Was \$26,000 **Sale Price: \$24,230\***

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