

## The 2017 Jeep Compass Built to be World Vehicle is Coming Soon to Showrooms

by Jim Stickford

The new 2017 Jeep Compass was built as a vehicle for the world and that was no easy task.

Chris O'Hara, senior manager - Jeep Brand Product Marketing at Fiat Chrysler, said that the new Compass has been in development for the past several years and that it's truly the first global SUV built by Fiat Chrysler. And building a vehicle that will be built and sold around the world was a huge challenge.

"Every market has its own preferences," O'Hara said. "It was very difficult to tailor a vehicle that will be sold in different markets around the world and will be built in four different plants in four different countries - Brazil, China, Mexico and India, for consumers in more than 100 countries around the world."

By having four plants manufacture the Compass, Fiat Chrysler has been able to adjust the vehicle for the different markets where it will be sold, O'Hara said.

But that created a logistics challenge that makes rolling out

the Compass across the globe "difficult" to make happen.

"Every year we do an evaluation of the Compass to make sure that meet the needs of customers around the world," O'Hara said. "A lot of research goes into this and we rely on my counterparts in other regions to shape each version of the Compass, which is based on the Small Y platform. That's the platform

we use for the Renegade, but the Compass has a longer wheel-base and different powertrains."

The new Compass is coming at the right time, O'Hara said. Fiat Chrysler defines it as a compact SUV and the popularity of such vehicles is growing every year.

"This is a world trend," O'Hara said. "We are putting the

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The new 2017 Jeep Compass is hitting dealerships soon.



It's now possible to read tablets via a Chevy's Wi-Fi capability.

## Chevy is Turning Vehicles Into Moving Wi-Fi Spots

Chevy makes some powerful vehicles with a lot of horsepower. But now vehicle power can be measured in a different way - gigabytes of data.

After using more than 4 million gigabytes of data in 2016, Chevrolet owners in the U.S. with an in-vehicle OnStar 4G LTE Wi-Fi hotspot will now have access to an unlimited prepaid data plan for only \$20 per month, said

GM's available starting March 3, and Chevrolet will offer this groundbreaking plan enabled by AT&T across its entire retail lineup.

Chevrolet data usage has increased exponentially as owners have come to appreciate the ability to stream video on a tablet, send email on a laptop or play

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## Chrysler Sees Monthly Ram Sales Increase

Fiat Chrysler reported U.S. sales of 168,326 units, a 10 percent decrease compared with sales in February 2016 (187,318 units).

In February, fleet sales of 44,898 units were down 26 percent year over year as Fiat Chrysler continues its strategy of reducing its sales to the daily rental segment, said Fiat Chrysler spokesman Ralph Kisiel. Fleet sales represented 27 percent of total company sales in February. Fiat Chrysler retail sales of 123,428 units were down

3 percent for the month, and represented 73 percent of total February sales.

Ram Truck brand sales were up 4 percent in February, compared with the same month a year ago, Kisiel said. Three Jeep brand vehicles topped February sales from a year ago, including the Jeep Renegade with an 11 percent increase. Sales of the Jeep Grand Cherokee, the brand's volume leader in February, were up 11 percent as well.

Three Dodge brand vehicles recorded year-over-year sales in-

creases in February led by the Dodge Journey's 55 percent sales gain. Sales of the Fiat 500 and the new Chrysler Pacifica minivan were up year over year as well.

Sales of the Ram pickup truck increased 5 percent year over year in the month. The brand introduced new special-edition Night packages for Ram 2500 and 3500 HD pickup trucks at the 2017 Chicago Auto Show in February, Kisiel. The new Night editions further expand the Ram fac-

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2017 Dodge Journey



2017 Chevrolet Trax

## February GM Sales Show Some Strength

At a time when auto sales in general are flat or even down, GM has posted gains in sales volume and market share.

Record sales of crossovers, large SUVs and pickups in February drove General Motors' retail market share up more than one-half percentage point versus a year ago, said GM spokesman Jim Cain.

Average transaction prices, which reflect what customers pay after sales incentives, also set a February record, Cain said.

"Our retail-focused go-to-market strategy is delivering robust results," said Kurt McNeil, U.S. vice president, Sales Operations. "All of our brands grew their average transaction prices by healthy amounts, and we delivered solid growth in the industry's fastest-growing and most profitable segments."

February Highlights (vs. February 2016):

- GM's total sales were up 4 percent to 237,388 units compared with an estimated 1 per-

cent decline for the industry. This equates to a market share of 17.5 percent, an increase of 0.9 percentage points.

- Retail sales totaled 188,715 units, up 5 percent, compared with a flat industry. This equates to a market share of 17.7 percent, an increase of 0.7 percentage points.

- GM's average transaction prices (ATPs) rose \$570 per unit to \$34,900, a February record.

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## Ford Feeds Demand for Trucks and SUVs

Overall Ford Motor Company U.S. sales totaled 208,440 vehicles in February.

The represents a 4 percent decline versus a year ago, said Ford spokesman Erich Merkle.

Retail sales of 134,576 vehicles decreased 3 percent, while fleet sales were down 5 percent, with 73,864 vehicles sold. The fleet decline reflects a strong year-ago comparison, with customer orders front-loaded in early 2016.

Overall car sales were down 24 percent, while customers continue to shift to trucks and SUVs.

Ford brand SUV sales totaled 68,820 vehicles - record February sales - up 6 percent versus a year ago, Merkle said. Record Escape sales of 27,637 vehicles and a 48 percent increase in Expedition sales drove the gains.

Ford F-Series was up 9 percent, with 65,956 trucks sold. This represents F-Series' best sales since 2004, with new Super Duty retail gains coming from every region of the country.

"We continue seeing strong consumer demand for the highest-series Super Duty pickups

and the all-new F-150 Raptor, plus greater availability of 2017 model year F-150s," said Mark LaNeve, vice president, U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service. "This drove a \$3,600 increase in average transaction prices for F-Series last month alone, Lincoln had a \$2,100 increase, ultimately delivering an overall company transaction price increase of \$1,900 per vehicle."

Lincoln sales totaled 8,744 vehicles, a 9 percent increase. Lincoln

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2018 Ford Expedition

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## Ford Sales Show Value of Its Truck Line

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MKC, up 12 percent, MKX, up 1 percent, and all-new Continental sales of 1,079 cars fueled the growth.

The Associated Press reported that automakers are also spending more because vehicles cost more. Consumers are rapidly shifting out of cars and into SUVs and trucks, which cost more money. Kelley Blue Book said the price people paid for a vehicle last month was up 2 percent from last February to an average of \$34,352.

Ford's U.S. sales chief Mark LaNeve said cars made up 53 percent of new vehicle sales in 2010. In February, they were around 35 percent.

"It is structural and in some ways breathtaking," LaNeve said. "There's going to be a car market, but where it eventually gets to, we don't know."

Ford February sales highlights include:

- Ford Expedition sales went from 3,984 in February 2016 to 5,906 in February 2017, a 48.2 percent increase.
- Focus sales went from 18,620 in February 2016 to 12,691 in February 2017, a 31.9 percent decline.

# GM Vehicle Sales in February Show Strength, Profits

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Three years of J.D. Power PIN data show that GM has led the industry in ATPs in 35 of 36 months through February.

GM internal data shows that incentive spending was essentially flat year over year, Cain said. This is in sharp contrast to recently published PIN estimates that noted an increase of 2.7 percentage points to 15 percent of ATP.

Commercial deliveries were up 7 percent, driven by an 11 percent increase in pickup sales and a 75 percent increase in Chevrolet Malibu sales. It was the best February Commercial sales since 2008. Government sales were up 4 percent and daily rental deliveries were down 2 percent. Total fleet sales were up 2 percent.

Small business deliveries,

which are included in retail sales, were up 13 percent, driven by a 22 percent increase in full-size pickups and a 39 percent increase in large vans.

Cain said GM estimates the seasonally adjusted annual selling rate (SAAR) for light vehicles was approximately 17.5 million units.

Brand Highlights (vs. February 2016) show that Chevrolet had its best February retail sales since 2007 and its best February total sales since 2008. Crossovers deliveries set a February record for the brand.

Three Chevrolet models – the Trax, Equinox and Volt – had their best February total and retail sales ever, Cain said. Traverse had its best-ever February total sales, and its best February retail sales since 2011.

Deliveries of the Chevrolet Bolt

EV approached 1,000 units. The national rollout of the crossover is just underway.

The Chevrolet Suburban had its best February retail sales since 2008, and the Silverado had its best February total and retail sales since 2007.

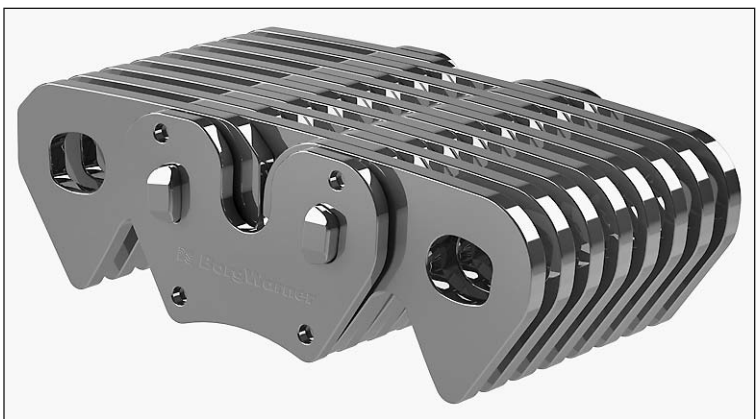
Buick had its best February retail sales since 2004, driven by the new Envision and the Encore, which set a February record.

GMC had its best February retail sales since 2002, with trucks and crossovers up 18 percent and 15 percent, respectively. Standouts include the Canyon, up 21 percent; the Sierra, up 19 percent; the Acadia, up 22 percent; and the Terrain, up 8 percent. GMC Denali penetration, at 26 percent of GMC retail sales, was the highest for any February in history, Cain said. GM esti-

mates that Chevrolet and GMC earned more than 40 percent of all full-size pickup retail sales, with ATPs up nearly \$600 per unit. Cadillac XT5 retail deliveries were 6 percent higher than the SRX it replaced. Average transaction prices are 8 percent higher than SRX.

Cain said GM is optimistic that the company, and Chevrolet in particular, will continue to gain retail market share in an industry expected to remain at or near record sales levels.

"Looking ahead, we will stay focused on strengthening our brands, growing retail sales and share, reducing daily rental deliveries and maintaining our operating discipline," McNeil said. "Our strong small business deliveries are a clear sign of growing confidence in the economy."



BorgWarner's HY-VO(R) tech is used in the Volt plug-in hybrid.

## BorgWarner's HY-VO Technology Used for Volt and Malibu Hybrids

BorgWarner, a global provider of clean and efficient technology solutions for combustion, hybrid and electric vehicles, is now supplying HY-VO chains for the Chevrolet Volt plug-in hybrid and Malibu hybrid.

Offering greater efficiency and lower noise than gear drives, BorgWarner's HY-VO chains transmit torque from the two-motor electric drive unit to the differential and front axles, said

BorgWarner spokeswoman Katya Pruett.

"Drivers expect a quiet ride and appreciate efficient propulsion. Our proven HY-VO chain technology delivers both with the high quality and durability automakers count on," said Joel Wiegert, president and general manager, BorgWarner Morse Systems. "This new application of our HY-VO chain technology is another example of BorgWarner's solutions for electric propulsion systems."

BorgWarner's tunable HY-VO chain technology features two unique link profiles assembled in a specific pattern to reduce noise.

BorgWarner's HY-VO chains drive a variety of applications, including front-wheel drive transmissions; part-time and all-wheel drive transfer cases; hybrid electric motor applications; and reverse and primary drives for power sports such as snowmobiles, scooters and all-terrain vehicles.

In addition to HY-VO chains, BorgWarner supplies mini direct-acting variable force solenoids and thermostats for these applications.

## MSU Extension in Macomb County Teaches Finances

MSU Extension is offering a free, three-week Money Management Workshop for people of all incomes who want to improve the way they handle money, said county spokeswoman LaShawn Brown.

The classes will focus on basic money-related activities. Learn to make decisions about money, create and manage a spending plan, identify specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely goals, clean up credit, reduce debt, savings and investing strategies, and selecting financial professionals.

The series will take place from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Wednesday, March 8, 15 and 22 at MSU Extension, VerKuilen Building, 21885

Dunham Road, Clinton Township, Brown said.

Individuals that attend all three classes within one series will receive a certificate of completion. Registration is required. To register, contact Mickie at 586-469-7614.

Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) brings a variety of educational programs to residents, empowering them to improve their lives and community. County-based MSUE staff, in concert with on-campus faculty members, serves residents with programming focused on agriculture, natural resources, children, youth, families, community and economic development.

## Chrysler Monthly Sales Heavy on Trucks, SUVs

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tory-custom truck family from the half-ton Ram 1500 announced in September 2016 to the brand's three-quarter and one-ton models. Production of the 2017 Ram HD Night models began in early February.

The Dodge Challenger, Dodge Journey, and Dodge Viper each posted sales gains in February, led by the Journey's 55 percent year-over-year increase, Kisiel said.

The Challenger turned in a 19 percent increase, while Viper sales were up 23 percent in the month.

The Dodge brand unveiled the new 2018 Dodge Durango SRT at last month's 2017 Chicago Auto Show, Kisiel said.

Three Jeep brand models recorded sales increases in February, Kisiel said. Both the Jeep Grand Cherokee – the brand's volume leader for the month – and the Jeep Renegade posted 11

percent year-over-year sales increases. In addition, the Jeep Wrangler logged a 2 percent increase in February.

Jeep brand retail sales figures were up year over year in February.

Sales of the Fiat 500 were up 1 percent in February, compared with the same month a year ago, Kisiel said. Sales of the new Fiat 124 Spider were up 26 percent compared with the previous month of January.

Sales of the new 2017 Chrysler Pacifica were up in its second month of year-over-year comparisons.

The sales numbers increased 36 percent compared with sales in the previous month of January, Kisiel said.

Alfa Romeo brand sales of 443 units were up 843 percent compared with the same month in 2016. Maserati brand sales of 1,087 units were up 49 percent compared with the same month a year ago.

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## Cadillac Makes Customizing Personal Preferences Easy

Technology now makes it possible for a car to be tuned to tastes and preferences of the driver.

On Feb. 21 Cadillac unveiled the next-generation Cadillac user experience system, which offers a more personalized, intuitive interface.

Cadillac spokesman Steve Martin said the new technology will debut in the Cadillac CTS, beginning with the 2017 interim model year, arriving at U.S. dealerships during the first quarter.

Cadillac plans to include the system in XTS and ATS sedans with the start of 2018 model year production. Cadillac's other product lines are scheduled to adopt the system in future model years, Martin said.

The next-generation Cadillac user experience is a dynamic platform that can be adjusted over time to meet a customer's evolving connectivity needs, leveraging the cloud to enable personalization, available connected navigation, and applications through the Collection app store, Martin said.

With functionality that applies popular apps and smartphone practices in the vehicle, the new user experience system provides customers with easier access to the most common features, Martin said. The more intuitive operation includes a Summary View in which all key applications – climate, audio, phone and navigation – are displayed on one screen.

"Cadillac pioneered connectivity by bringing OnStar to market, and more recently we became the first luxury brand to enable Apple CarPlay and Android Auto across our product line," says Richard Brekus, Cadillac director of product strategy. "We have worked to improve overall system response in recent years,

and now this next-generation user experience system delivers more improvements, focused mainly on intuitive control."

My Driver Preferences are personalized, cloud-based profiles that allow users to customize the infotainment system to match individual preferences and take that same customized experience with them into any new Cadillac user experience equipped vehicle.

Features such as vehicle and display setting, contact favorites, navigation route preferences and recent destinations can be customized and follow a user's profile.

Each driver can create an individual account and personalize their preferences for the Cadillac user experience. Vehicle owners can manage their My Driver Preferences in the vehicle or via their myCadillac Owner Center on the Cadillac Web site.

The new Cadillac user experience features an available all-new navigation app with an intuitive interface and access to destination information via available cloud-based services, Martin said.

This includes updated points of interest, live traffic information, fuel prices and parking information, Martin said.

Through simple input methods, such as enhanced voice recognition and an improved on-



Cadillac tech makes setting personal preferences easier than ever.

screen search function, users have access to more relevant search results. Over time, this opt-in subscription-based system can learn a user's preferred routes and destinations, offering predictive suggestions based upon traffic and frequent destinations.

New Cadillac user experience equipped vehicles currently come standard with an available, opt-in 12-month connected navigation trial.

The built-in OnStar 4G LTE enables an active connection to the vehicle that, with customer consent, will allow Cadillac to remotely update features such as navigation and the newly launched Collection app store, after vehicle purchase, Martin said.

The available 4GLTE Wi-Fi hotspot allows passengers to connect up to seven compatible mobile devices, smartphones, and tablets to high-speed wireless Internet. The new system supports use of two compatible

phones concurrently via Bluetooth.

Users can access Apple CarPlay and Android Auto advanced smartphone integration through the Home screen. Apple CarPlay and Android Auto compatibility are subject to their terms, privacy statements and data plan rates, and require a compatible smartphone.

Every new Cadillac currently comes standard with an available 12-month OnStar subscription at no additional cost, Martin said. Among other benefits, this connectivity plan features OnStar Smart Driver, an opt-in service designed to help owners maximize their vehicle's overall performance, reduce wear and tear, monitor fuel efficiency and improve their driving – all factors that add to the overall ownership experience.

Owners can also manage their vehicles remotely with the industry-leading myCadillac mobile app via their compatible smartphones.

## Auburn Hills' Continental Admired

The technology company Continental, which maintains its North American headquarters in Auburn Hills, was honored as one of *FORTUNE* magazine's "Most Admired Companies" for 2017, ranking among the Top 5 in the motor vehicle parts category, said Continental spokesman Thomas Recke.

*FORTUNE* recognized the company for excellence in areas like product & service quality, use of corporate assets, financial soundness quality of management and social responsibility. Continental currently employs more than 220,000 people in 55 countries, Recke said.

"Being named as one of *FORTUNE*'s 'Most Admired Companies' is not only a great honor, but a direct result of the great work and commitment of our teams around the world," said Samir Salman, CEO of Continental North America. "Every day, we are actively involved in shaping the future of mobility, working with partners and customers around the world. This recognition from *FORTUNE* highlights our values-driven management style as well as our sustainable business model translates into economic success, but are also recognized externally."

Along with this recognition, Continental was also named one of "America's Best Employers" by *Forbes* magazine, Recke said.

## AAA Notes Rising Gasoline Prices Across Michigan

DEARBORN, Mich. (AP) – AAA Michigan after conducting a survey of gasoline prices throughout the state of Michigan says gas prices statewide have risen by about 4 cents per gallon in the week ending Sunday, Feb. 27.

The Dearborn-based auto club says that as of Feb. 27 the average price for self-serve regular unleaded gasoline was about \$2.30 per gallon.

That's about 54 cents more than it was at the same point last year, according to figures kept by AAA Michigan.

AAA says the lowest average price was about \$2.28 per gallon in the Detroit area, where it's up about 3 cents from a week ago. The highest average was about \$2.40 in the Marquette area.

It was the seventh consecutive week that Marquette had the highest average price in the state, according to recent surveys conducted by AAA across the state.

According to AAA, Michigan ranks 21st nationally for the most expensive average daily gas price.

AAA Michigan develops its fuel price numbers through surveys of daily gasoline and fuel prices at 2,800 different filling stations across the state of Michigan.

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# The 2017 Jeep Compass Built Across Globe, Making it Truly Vehicle for World Market

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Compass in the market segment between the Renegade and the Cherokee. It's closer in price to the Renegade, but its refinements are closer to the more premium Cherokee. It's a vehicle that is a unique combination of rugged and refined. It can go off road, but still maintains a premium feel."

O'Hara said that Jeep "consulted" with customers in the development stage and the thing they liked most about the vehicle was its interior space.

"It's a few inches longer than the Renegade and we put all that into the Compass' interior," O'Hara said. "So to hear that they appreciated the amount of interior space was good news. They also liked the black roof feature that comes with some versions. It doesn't change the actual dimensions of the vehicle, but the black roof, we were told, made the Compass look lower and sleeker."

Overall, O'Hara said that the people at Jeep are excited about the Compass and believe it will do well in its segment.

"This segment of SUV sold about 6.5 million vehicles last year," O'Hara said. "By 2020 we expect sales in the segment to reach 7.5 million. And it's a fuel efficient vehicle. Now customers no longer have to choose between space and economy."

One thing that many find interesting, O'Hara said, is that the Compass' SUV segment appeals to women a lot. About 60 percent of buyers in this niche are female. But Jeep has a Compass model designed to appeal to men with the Trailhawk version. It has a more aggressive look.

"Our all-new 2017 Jeep Compass enters an extremely important and growing segment worldwide, and does so with an unmatched list of attributes that includes benchmark 4x4 off-road capability, exceptional on-road driving dynamics, fuel-efficient powertrains, countless advanced technology and safety features, all wrapped in a premium, authentic Jeep design," said Mike Manley, head of Jeep Brand – FCA Global. "Built around the world for customers everywhere, Jeep Compass raises the bar in the compact-SUV segment."

The 2017 Jeep Compass is available in four different trim configurations: Sport, Latitude, Limited and Trailhawk. The new 2017 Jeep Compass delivers best-in-class off-road capability, courtesy of two advanced, intelligent 4x4 systems, each of which can send 100 percent of available torque to any one wheel, O'Hara said. Features include:

- Jeep Active Drive – full-time 4x4 system;
- Jeep Active Drive Low – class-exclusive full-time 4x4 system with 20:1 crawl ratio.

Both Jeep Active Drive and Active Drive Low 4x4 systems include the Jeep Selec-Terrain system, providing up to five modes (Auto, Snow, Sand and Mud modes, plus exclusive Rock mode on the Trailhawk model) for the best four-wheel-drive performance on- or off-road and in any weather condition. For even greater Trail Rated off-road capability, Selec-Terrain includes Selec-Speed Control with Hill-descent Control on Trailhawk models, O'Hara said.

Compass features a disconnecting rear axle and power take-off unit (PTU), in order to pro-

vide 4x4 models with enhanced fuel economy. Jeep Active Drive and Active Drive Low 4x4 systems instantly engage when 4x4 traction is needed.

For those who seek adventure off the beaten path, O'Hara said the Compass Trailhawk model delivers best-in-class Trail Rated 4x4 capability with:

- Standard Jeep Active Drive Low 4x4 20:1 crawl ratio;
- Selec-Terrain with exclusive Rock mode;
- Increased ride height of almost one inch, skid plates and Jeep signature red front and rear tow hooks;
- Unique fascias with 30-degree approach angle, 24-degree breakover angle and a 34-degree departure angle;
- Hill-descent Control;
- Aggressive 17-inch off-road tires;
- Up to 19 inches of water fording;
- Up to 2,000-lbs. towing capability.

Fiat Chrysler's "small wide architecture," a fully independent suspension, segment-exclusive frequency damping front-and-rear-strut system, and precise electric power steering combine to deliver superior on-road driving dynamics in the new Compass, O'Hara said.

And it also has a rigid foundation. The upper body structure and frame are engineered as a single unit for a stiff and more mass-efficient structure, and it is designed and built with an extensive use of high-strength steel and liberal use of structural adhesives. More than 65 percent high-strength steel is used for maximizing vehicle dynamics and crash performance while optimizing weight efficiency.



2017 Compass Cockpit offers room and modern technology.

A total of five engines – three gasoline and two diesel – will be offered, depending on the market worldwide. In North America, the proven, fuel-efficient 2.4-liter Tigershark four-cylinder engine will power the Compass, delivering best-in-class 4x4 highway fuel economy of 31 mpg when paired with the six-speed manual transmission.

Efficiency and refinement also are hallmarks of Fiat Chrysler's 16-valve, 2.4-liter Tigershark I-4 engine with the MultiAir2 electro-hydraulic, fully variable valve-actuation system, O'Hara said. The advanced technology engine produces 180 horsepower, 175 lb.-ft. of torque and is mated to the choice of three transmissions in North America:

- Class-exclusive nine-speed

automatic transmission for 4x4 models;

- Six-speed manual transmission (4x2 and 4x4 models);
- Aisin six-speed automatic transmission for 4x2 Compass models.

The new 2017 Jeep Compass is the only compact SUV to offer a nine-speed automatic transmission, enabling the vehicle to optimize engine output and for aggressive launches and smooth, efficient power delivery at highway speeds, O'Hara said. The nine-speed transmission is standard on all Jeep Compass 4x4 models.

The Compass 4x2 and 4x4 models are equipped with the standard six-speed manual transmission. This proven transmission features a 6.68 ratio spread and a 4.438 final-drive ratio for fuel efficiency at faster speeds.



Mopar makes it easy to personalize the new Jeep Compass.

## Mopar Allows Owners to Make New Compass a Real Personal Vehicle

The introduction of a new Jeep Compass gives owners the opportunity to turn that vehicle into something personal.

And the Mopar brand is pointing the way for personalization of the new Jeep Compass, said Fiat Chrysler spokesman Darren Jacobs. Owners of the compact SUV can choose from more than 90 authentic Mopar accessories when the vehicle arrives in Jeep dealerships in North America in the first quarter of 2017.

"Owners can put their unique stamp on the all-new Jeep Compass right at launch with a full line of authentic Jeep accessories," said Pietro Gorlier, head of Parts and Service (Mopar), FCA – Global. "Mopar celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2017, and we continue to deliver products that remain true to the DNA of each brand and the personality of each vehicle. With a full line of accessories available at launch, we're ready to do that for 2017 Jeep Compass owners."

Mopar accessories for the Jeep Compass fit a variety of lifestyles, from those seeking the freedom to go further to those looking to increase convenience and functionality, Gorlier said. Mopar products are designed and engineered together with the original design of the vehicle to deliver a perfect fit and finish. Mopar products also offer a comprehensive

warranty and are built according to factory-authorized specifications, providing customers quality, durability and peace of mind.

A few of the Mopar accessories available for the all-new Jeep Compass include:

- Rock rails: Protect from off-road obstacles with durable rock rails, made of galvanized steel and painted black. Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP): \$925.
- 18-inch wheels: Standout on the streets or trail with unique, Mopar 18-inch cast aluminum wheels, painted high-gloss granite crystal. MSRP: \$195 each.
- Roof rack cross rails: These cross rails attach to production roof rails and allow for bike, ski, watersports or luggage carrier attachments. MSRP: \$225.
- Rooftop cargo basket: Stow extra gear securely with Mopar rooftop storage options designed specifically for the Jeep Compass. MSRP: \$358.
- Graphics: Customize the exterior with a unique black hood graphic and black swoosh body-side graphic. MSRP: \$100/\$180.
- Cargo tote: Keep gear gathered up and transportable with this convenient cargo storage option. MSRP: \$33.20.
- Molded cargo tray: Protects the cargo area from dirt, sand and moisture and removes easily for cleaning. MSRP: \$95.

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# Mopar, Dodge Brands Earn Wins at NHRA

The 2017 NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series season is off to a dream start for the Mopar and Dodge brands. Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) and Mopar teammates Matt Hagan and Leah Pritchett won their respective classes in the 33rd Annual NHRA Arizona Nationals at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park on Feb. 26, just as each did during the NHRA Winternationals at Auto Club Raceway at Pomona two weeks ago.

Hagan took home the Funny Car Wally for the second consecutive event and the 24th time in his career, while Pritchett won in Top Fuel for the third time overall and the second time in a row.

Hagan and the Mopar/Sandvik Coromant Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car team qualified in the No. 4 position and were matched up against Mopar teammate Ron Capps in the NAPA Dodge Charger R/T in the final round.

Hagan turned on the win light in the right lane as he made a pass of 3.878 seconds at 330.88 mph with a reaction time of .057. Capps narrowly missed the victory with a reaction time of .075 paired with a 3.883-second pass at 333.88 mph.

Hagan beat Cruz Pedregon in the first round, then defeated Tim Wilkerson in the second before matching up against and besting his Mopar and DSR teammate, and No. 1 qualifier, Tommy Johnson Jr. in the semis.

After a heartbreaking redlight in the semifinals during the Winternationals, 2016 Funny Car champion Ron Capps righted the ship with his advance to the final round. Capps bested Jeff Arend in the first round before defeating Gary Densham in the second. He then dispatched of Jim Campbell to advance to the final round against Hagan.

Tommy Johnson Jr. and the Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T set a track elapsed-time record at Wild Horse Pass in round four of qualifying on Saturday evening with a 3.837-second run at 329.10 mph. Johnson looked to be the early favorite, and from his No. 1 position he knocked out fellow Dodge competitor Phil Burkart Jr. in the first round, before beating Robert Hight in the second. However, he was ultimately defeated by teammate Hagan.

The aforementioned Jim Campbell was the tory of the day as he advanced all the way to the semis after defeating both Courtney Force and J.R. Todd. Campbell campaigns a Dodge Charger R/T for longtime drag racing stalwart Jim Dunn.

# Detroit Pistons Building New Practice Site

DETROIT (AP) – The Detroit Pistons are partnering with Henry Ford Health Systems on a new development that will bring the team’s corporate headquarters and practice facility into the city.

Officials said Feb. 24 that the offices and team performance complex will be built between Henry Ford Hospital and Wayne State University in Detroit’s New Center area.

Construction is scheduled to begin this summer. Detroit’s NBA team is moving downtown in time for the 2017-18 season. The Pistons will share Little Caesars Arena with the NHL’s Detroit Red Wings. The new arena is being built just north of downtown.

The Pistons will continue to practice at the team’s suburban facility near The Palace of Auburn Hills until the 100,000-square foot office and performance complex is completed.

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# Ford Looking at Technology for Reading Mood of Driver

The days of Knight Rider, where your car will understand what you feel is coming ever closer. At least that's what Ford is aiming for.

"We are now used to cars that understand what we say," said Ford spokeswoman Monika Wagener. "Experts predict that in future they may also know how we feel – sometimes without us having to say a word."

Nearly 90 percent of all new cars are expected to offer voice recognition capability by 2022, Wagener said. The next step for the cars of tomorrow could be to pick up on tiny changes in facial expression as well as modulations and inflections in our speaking voice, easing the driving experience for consumers.

Advanced systems – equipped with sophisticated microphones and in-car cameras – could learn which songs passengers like to hear when they are stressed and those occasions they prefer to simply enjoy silence. Interior lighting could also complement the mood, Wagener said.

"We're well on the road to developing the empathetic car which might tell you a joke to cheer you up, offer advice when you need it, remind you of birthdays and keep you alert on a long drive," said Fatima Vital, senior director, Marketing Automotive, Nuance Communications, which helped Ford develop voice recognition of the SYNC in-car connectivity system.

Cloud-based voice control is anticipated to be available on 75 per cent of new cars by 2022, and it is predicted future systems would evolve into personal assistants that shuffle appointments and order takeaways when drivers are held up in traffic jams.

Vital said movie fans might recall in the film "Her," Scarlett Jo-

hansson's character Samantha catered to Theodore Twombly's every command, as a voice recognition system, which with uncanny accuracy, learned his mood, needs and wants – just from the sound of his voice. Someday soon, real car could do something similar.

This summer, Ford's in-car connectivity system SYNC 3 will enable drivers to connect to Amazon's virtual assistant Alexa and offers 23 different languages and many local accents, Wagener said. By accessing cloud-based resources, cars of the future could enable even more drivers to speak their native language, good news for those celebrating International Mother Language Day.

"Voice commands like 'I'm hungry' to find a restaurant and 'I need coffee' have already brought SYNC 3 into personal assistant territory," said Mareike Sauer, voice control engineer, Connectivity Application Team, Ford of Europe. "For the next step, drivers will not only be able to use their native tongue, spoken in their own accent, but also use their own wording, for more natural speech."

Apple CarPlay provides a simplified way to use the iPhone interface on a car's touch screen, giving users access to Siri Eyes-Free voice controls, as well as Apple Maps, Apple Music, Phone, Messages, and a variety of third party apps. Android Auto delivers Google Maps and music to a car's screen while enabling voice controls for phone calls and messaging.

A research project Ford is currently running with RWTH Aachen University includes using multiple microphones to improve speech processing and reduce the effect of external noise



A Ford employee shows emotions on faces that Ford technology is being programmed to recognize.

and potential disruptions, Wagener said. Nuance says that within the next two years, voice control systems could prompt us with: "Would you like to order flowers for your mum for Mothers' Day?" "Shall I choose a less congested but slower route home?" and "You're running low on your favourite chocolate and your favourite store has some in stock. Want to stop by and pick some up?"

Future gesture and eye control would enable drivers to answer

calls by nodding their head, adjust the volume with short twisting motions, and set the navigation with a quick glance at their destination on a map.

So is there a danger that, as in the movie "Her," we might fall for our advanced voice recognition systems?

"Lots of people already love their cars, but with new in-car systems that learn and adapt, we can expect some seriously strong relationships to form," said Dominic Watt, senior lecturer, De-

partment of Language and Linguistic Science, University of York. "The car will soon be our assistant, travel companion and sympathetic ear, and you'll be able to discuss everything and ask anything, to the point many of us might forget we're even talking to a machine."

At Mobile World Congress, the world's largest gathering for the mobile industry, in Barcelona, this week, Ford will reveal the next advances in mobility and connectivity.

## Takata Agrees to \$1 Billion Federal Penalty

DETROIT (AP) – Japanese auto parts maker Takata Corp. pleaded guilty to fraud Feb. 27 and agreed to pay \$1 billion in penalties for concealing an air bag defect blamed for at least 16 deaths, most of them in the U.S.

The scandal, meanwhile, seemed to grow wider when plaintiffs' attorneys charged that five major automakers knew the devices were dangerous but continued to use them for years to save money.

In pleading guilty, Takata admitted hiding evidence that millions of its air bag inflators can explode with too much force, hurling lethal shrapnel into drivers and passengers. Chief financial officer Yoichiro Nomura spoke on behalf of the Tokyo-based company, saying the conduct was "completely unacceptable."

The inflators are blamed for 11 deaths in the U.S. alone and more than 180 injuries worldwide. The problem touched off the biggest recall in U.S. automotive history, involving 42 million vehicles and up to 69 million inflators.

Penalties in the criminal case include \$850 million in restitution to automakers, \$125 million for victims and \$25 million for the U.S. government. Takata's fine to the government could have been as much as \$1.5 billion, but the judge in the case said such a sum probably would put the company out of business.

While Takata's destruction "would probably be a fair outcome," it wouldn't help victims get paid, U.S. District Judge George Caram Steeh said in accepting the deal negotiated with the U.S. Justice Department.

Takata's penalty is small compared with the one imposed on Volkswagen, which must buy back cars and pay up to \$21 billion over its emissions-cheating scandal. Steeh said he would pick a person to administer the restitution funds this week. Kenneth Feinberg, who handled the General Motors ignition switch and BP Oil spill compensation funds, is being considered.

Takata's inflators use ammonium nitrate to create a small explosion that inflates air bags in a crash. But when exposed to prolonged high temperatures and humidity, the chemical can deteriorate and burn too fast. That can blow apart a metal canister.

In the U.S., 19 automakers are recalling inflators. Worldwide,

the total number is over 100 million.

Takata is "fully committed to ensuring that such conditions never happen again," Nomura said.

The costs of the recalls have saddled Takata, which also makes seat belts, with two straight years of losses. Lawyers acknowledged in court that the company will have to be sold to fund the agreement. Separately, three former executives are charged with falsifying test reports. They remain in Japan.

Steeh rejected pleas by lawyers for plaintiffs in lawsuits against Takata and automakers to delay the sentencing. They contended language in the plea agreement would help the automakers' defense because it painted them as victims of Takata's deception.

"Whether the OEMs (automakers) have a role as culprit in addition to victim is something that can be resolved through the litigation process," he said.

Plaintiffs in dozens of lawsuits over the defect charged in court papers filed Monday in Miami that Honda, Toyota, Nissan, Ford and BMW had independent knowledge that Takata's air bags were unsafe before putting them in millions of vehicles.

After an inflator ruptured in 2009, one of the auto companies described the problem as "one in which a passenger protection device was transformed into a killing weapon," the court filing said. The company was not identified.

The filing marks the broadest allegation yet that automakers knowingly put their customers in danger.

"The automotive defendants were aware that rupture after rupture, both during testing and in the field, confirmed how dangerous and defective Takata's air bags were," the plaintiffs' attorneys said.

The auto companies have asserted that they were deceived by Takata and shouldn't be held liable.

In Takata's plea agreement, the Justice Department says Takata got the car companies to keep buying its inflators "through submission of false and fraudulent reports and other information that concealed the true and accurate test results."

The plaintiffs are suing not only over the deaths and injuries

but over what they say is the vehicles' loss in value because of the defect.

The plaintiff's filing Monday alleges that Honda, Takata's biggest customer, was involved in designing Takata inflators, and two of them exploded and ruptured at Honda facilities in 1999 and 2000. Toyota had quality concerns about Takata in 2003, while Ford ignored objections of its own inflator expert. Nissan switched to Takata inflators to save about \$4 per inflator, the lawyers alleged, while BMW also sought cost savings.

BMW, Nissan, Ford and Toyota declined comment. Honda said the lawyers' filing was misleading and an effort to maintain claims for economic losses regardless of Takata's guilty plea. The company also labeled as false an allegation that it proceeded with Takata inflators for cost reasons while knowing they were dangerous.

## Nebraska Ponders Self-Drive Regs

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) – Nebraska should be careful not to over-regulate self-driving vehicles as technology continues to develop, lobbyists for auto manufacturers and dealers said Feb. 28 at a legislative committee hearing.

A bill sponsored by Sen. Tyson Larson of O'Neill would create provisions allowing for autonomous vehicles in the state. Nebraska is now among the majority of states that don't acknowledge the emerging technology's existence in statutes, even as more companies have begun testing self-driving cars.

"Autonomous vehicles are no longer just an engineer's vision of the future," Larson said.

Drivers could see self-driving cars on many roadways as early as 2020, said John Lindsay, a lobbyist for the Auto Alliance. He urged the committee to make sure any legislation is loose enough not to interfere as manufacturers continue developing autonomous vehicles.

Loy Todd, president of the Nebraska New Car and Truck Dealers Association, told the committee he wants to avoid any legislation that could stop dealers from selling self-driving cars when they're commercially available.

Ford and GM, have predicted several models should be on the market between 2018 and 2021.



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## 2017 MALIBU "LT"



- 1.5L Turbo DOHC Engine!
- 6 Speed Transmission!
- 7" Color Touch Screen MyLink Radio!
- Bluetooth for Phone!
- Rear Vision Camera!
- OnStar w/4G LTE w/built-in Wi-Fi Hotspot!
- 17" Alloy Wheels!
- Remote Keyless Entry!
- Chevrolet Complete Care INCLUDED!

Stock# H32110

Was \$26,000 Sale Price: **\$19,730\***

**24 MONTH LEASE**



# \$115\*



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Stock# Q7427

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Was \$42,640 Sale Price: **\$30,499\***

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# GM Employees Donate Blood At the Tech Center in Warren

by Jim Stickford

Sometimes seeing red isn't a bad thing. Just ask the folks at the GM Tech Center's Cadillac Building.

Employees who work in the Cadillac Building held a Red Cross blood drive on March 2.

"This is the first blood drive we've held for 2017," said blood drive organizer Laurie Sweeney, who is an executive administrator for the directors who work in the building. "We hold drives quarterly. I've been the organizer since 2012. I can't even remember how I got the task. But I'm a big advocate for the tenants in the building and I like to make things happen."

And Sweeney said that she especially likes to make things happen for a good cause.

"The Red Cross always needs blood," Sweeney said. "It's great to help those in need and now that it's tornado season, the Red Cross really needs blood."

Sweeney said the she and her colleagues have been working with the Red Cross so long that setting up an individual blood drive is routine.

"The process goes smoothly," Sweeney said. "The Red Cross contacts me and sets the schedule for the year. I get the room ready where the blood will be donated the day for a particular blood drive. They come in and set up their equipment."

Sweeney sends out an announcement shortly before the actual drive and people can sign up to make a donation.

What's interesting, Sweeney said, is that it's done electronically these days. In the announcement, there's a code spe-

cific to the Cadillac Building blood drive. People interested in donating visit the Red Cross Web page and input the code and sign up for what time they would like to come in and make a blood donation.

"We get walk-ins as well," Sweeney said, "but most of the donations come from people who sign up online. We usually get about 40 people signing up and collect somewhere in the neighborhood of 30 or 35 units of blood. It's flu season and sometimes people who sign up are rejected after they fill out their questionnaires. That's why it's important to get as many people as we can to sign up. I see many of the same faces whenever we hold a driver and these people are to be commended."

One of the donors was Eliza-



Durrett after donating a pint of blood to the Red Cross.

beth Durrett, an IT systems engineer in the Cadillac Building.

"I signed up because it's the right thing to do," Durrett said. "I like to give as often as I am able. I first gave blood when I was 18 and have been donating ever since then."

Durrett said that she's glad to

donate and that it's not that big a deal.

"This is not hard," Durrett said. "It really doesn't hurt, it's helpful to people who need it and we get free snacks. What's not to like. And this time we donors got a little gift card from Amazon."

## Chevy OnStar Service Brings Wi-Fi Home

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

online using a gaming console in their vehicles, and now customers can utilize the full potential of their OnStar 4G LTE Wi-Fi hotspot without worrying about running out of data.

"We have contractors bidding jobs in their Silverados, families streaming movies in their Suburbans and Malibus and everyone tapping into the cloud for music," said Alan Batey, president of GM North America and global head of Chevrolet. "With the most affordable unlimited 4G LTE data plan in the auto industry, the widest availability of Apple CarPlay and Android Auto and new connected services like On-

Star AtYourService, our momentum can only grow."

Last year alone, Chevrolet customers used nearly 200 percent more OnStar 4G LTE data in their vehicles compared to 2015, Cain said. In the second half of 2016, Chevy owners used almost as much data as they had the previous 24 months since OnStar 4G LTE launched.

To put this data usage in perspective, Chevrolet owners and their passengers streamed the equivalent of more than 17.5 million hours of video in 2016.

"We're pleased to deliver this special unlimited data plan to Chevy owners," said Chris Penrose, president, IoT Solutions, AT&T. "Accessing the internet through AT&T's 4G LTE Wi-Fi,

passengers now can access all of their content and enjoy endless entertainment on the go."

As the first automaker to offer 4G LTE connectivity across its entire retail portfolio, Chevrolet has sold more than 3.1 million OnStar 4G LTE-connected vehicles since June 2014 and has more vehicles on the road equipped with 4G LTE than any other automaker.

Today, along with the 4G LTE connection enabled by AT&T, the OnStar Basic Plan comes standard on all new Chevrolet retail models, Cain said. The Basic Plan includes select remote vehicle services and the OnStar AtYourService marketplace via the my-Chevrolet mobile app among other features.

## Fabricating Inc. Execs Speak at Conference

John Weinhardt, CEO and Tom Tiekiele, CFO of Unique Fabricating, Inc. of Auburn Hills, which engineers and manufactures multi-material foam, rubber, and plastic components utilized in noise, vibration and harshness management for the automotive and industrial appliance market, will present at the 29th Annual ROTH Conference on Tuesday, March 14.

They will also conduct one-on-one meetings that day, said Fabricating, Inc. spokesman Rob Fink.

The conference will be held March 12-15, 2017 at The Ritz Carlton in Dana Point, Calif.

This conference is one of the largest of its kind in the U.S. Following the success of previous years' events, the ROTH Conference, with close to 500 participating companies and over 4,000 attendees, will feature presentations from hundreds of public and private companies in a variety of sectors including Healthcare Technology, Internet & Media, Cleantech, Industrial Growth & Solar, Consumer, Oil & Gas / Mining & Minerals and Business Services. ROTH combines company presentations, one-on-one and small group meetings and panel discussions.

Unique Fabricating, Inc. engineers and manufactures components for customers in the automotive and industrial appliance market, Fink said.

The company's solutions are comprised of multi-material foam, rubber, and plastic components and utilized in noise, vibration and harshness (NVH) management, acoustical management, water and air sealing, decorative and other functional applications.

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## Takata's Air Bag Scandal Hits Five Automakers

DETROIT (AP) – Plaintiffs in dozens of lawsuits against air bag maker Takata and five automakers allege the car companies knew that Takata's products were dangerous yet continued to use them for years in order to save money.

The allegations against Honda, Toyota, Nissan, Ford and BMW were made in a filing Feb. 27 with a federal court in Miami, which is handling pretrial evidence-gathering in lawsuits against Takata and the automakers. The filing says documents produced in the case show the auto companies had independent knowledge that Takata's air bag inflators were unsafe before putting them in millions of vehicles.

The allegations come just hours before Takata entered a guilty plea to one criminal charge and agree to pay a \$1 billion penalty at a hearing in Detroit.

The Feb. 27 filing says that after an inflator ruptured in 2009, one of the auto companies described the problem as "one in which a passenger protection device was transformed into a killing weapon." The company wasn't named in the document.

The court filing marks the broadest allegation yet that automakers knew about Takata's problems yet continued to use the inflators and put their customers in danger. The lawyers are trying to counter the auto companies' assertion that they shouldn't be liable because they, too, were deceived by Takata.

But the OEMs have pointed to Takata's plea agreement, in which the Justice Department says Takata got the car companies to keep buying its inflators "through submission of false and fraudulent reports and other in-

formation that concealed the true and accurate test results."

In addition to the deaths and injuries caused by Takata air bags, lawyers allege that vehicles sold by the automakers declined in value because they kept using the Takata equipment.

The filing Feb. 27 includes specific allegations that each of the automakers knew about Takata's problems:

- Honda, Takata's largest customer, was intimately involved in designing Takata inflators, and two Takata inflators exploded and ruptured at Honda facilities in 1999 and 2000.

- Toyota had quality concerns about Takata in 2003, the same year that an inflator ruptured at a Toyota testing facility, the document says. At least 15 inflators in Toyotas blew apart by 2014, when the company issued a nationwide recall.

- Ford picked Takata inflators over the objections of its own inflator expert because Takata was apparently the only company that could provide the number of inflators Ford needed, the lawyers wrote. One document obtained through the pretrial process said that Ford had a "gun to its head, so it had to accept ammonium nitrate."

- Nissan, the document said, switched to Takata inflators "primarily, if not solely" to save about \$4 per inflator. Another automaker told Nissan about the risky inflators in 2006, eight years before Nissan began a national recall, the document said.

- At BMW, documents show the company went to Takata seeking cost savings.

As early as 2003, a Takata inflator ruptured in a BMW in Switzerland.



# Proposed Sale of GM's Opel Meant to Create Auto Giant

PARIS (AP) – The chairman of French carmaker PSA Group wants to create a “European car champion” with the purchase of General Motors’ European car business and pledged to work with governments and unions worried over job cuts.

After reporting a near-doubling in 2016 profits, Carlos Tavares lauded the benefits of a deal that could reshape the continent’s car market and leave PSA, the maker of Peugeot and Citroen cars, leapfrogging the Renault Nissan alliance to be second behind Germany’s Volkswagen.

Speaking in Paris Feb. 23, Tavares said PSA’s ambition to buy GM’s loss-making Germany subsidiary Opel and its British brand Vauxhall is rooted in its remarkable financial turnaround. The company, which had to be bailed out by Chinese investors and the French government just three years ago, was able to announce Feb. 23 its first dividend payment in six years alongside the profit jump.

Tavares insisted that the potential deal is “nice to have” but “not a must” and laid out a string of reasons why he thinks it would be a good idea: it could improve Opel’s bottom line, expand PSA’s market, and keep both companies competitive globally.

He said a combined company, which would be Europe’s No. 2 carmaker behind Volkswagen, could have volumes of 5 million cars. Detroit-based GM has been trying to boost prospects for its European business. It last made a full-year profit there in 1999.

“We believe there is an opportunity to create a European car champion, resulting from the

combination of a French company and German company and without forgetting our U.K. friends,” Tavares said.

“Opel has making red ink for 10 years, and burning approximately 1 billion in cash every year,” he said. “We believe we can help.”

He insisted that Opel would remain a German company, in part to benefit from Germany’s strong reputation for car engineering.

He said PSA would respect existing labor agreements, though he didn’t explicitly rule out job cuts. Tavares has spoken with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and met with Opel employee representatives since the takeover discussions were announced last week.

“The best way ... is to have unions and governments on your side,” he said.

Jobs are an especially sensitive issue in what is election year in both Germany and France. The German and French economy ministers discussed the potential deal at a meeting in Paris on Feb. 23.

Opel employee representatives and union leaders in Germany say they will push to keep current jobs and factories, and Britain’s biggest trade union has demanded that the government protect Vauxhall, as Britain prepares to leave the EU and PSA considers the buyout.

While revenues last year were largely stable, PSA’s group income was 1.7 billion euros last year, up from 899 million in 2015, attributed in part to a faster-than-expected cost-cutting.

Beyond Europe, Tavares acknowledged that PSA is frustrated with lost market share in China.

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\$69\*

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STK# BG746

Was \$40,140  
Sale Price \$33,699\*

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STK# BG145

Was \$29,540  
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STK# BG227

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Was \$41,900  
Sale Price \$34,769\*

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**36 MONTH LEASE**

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# Chevy Develops ‘Augmented Reality’ Tech

New technologies make it possible for companies like GM to use media in a new way to get its message out.

Epic Games, The Mill and Chevrolet have joined forces to revolutionize the conventions of digital filmmaking with “The Human Race,” a short film and augmented reality (AR) presentation debuting March 1 at the Game Developer’s Conference (GDC) in San Francisco, California, as part of Epic Games Founder and CEO Tim Sweeney’s opening presentation, said GM spokeswoman Afaf Farah.

Combining an advanced implementation of Epic’s Unreal Engine with The Mill’s proprietary virtual production toolkit, Mill Cyclops, “The Human Race” shows what can be done when the two technologies are pushed beyond the limits of existing real-time rendering capabilities to produce a futuristic film that features the 2017 Chevrolet Camaro ZL1 in a heated race with the Chevrolet FNR concept car, Farah said.

The only physical vehicle filmed for “The Human Race” was the Mill BLACKBIRD, a fully adjustable rig that enables filmmakers to insert almost any car model into any filmed environment. Until now, CG cars were added by visual effects artists in post-production, requiring days of rendering to produce high-quality imagery, Farah said. During this shoot, however, live video feeds as well as positional data from the Array tracking system were fed directly into Unreal Engine. The Camaro was then rendered and composited seamlessly into the footage in real-time AR, allowing the directors to instantly see the final look and composition of each shot.

The same real-time technology was used to create, alter and produce the short film, blurring the



The “skin” of the vehicle is added digitally via computer technology.

lines between production and post. The ability to create “final pixels” in real time will ultimately change the way filmmakers create content and make critical decisions, Farah said.

A live recreation of the AR visualization was also shown during Epic’s presentation, offering an up-close view of the real-time tech used to produce the project.

“‘The Human Race’ blends cinematic storytelling and real-time visual effects to define a new era of narrative possibilities,” said Angus Kneale, chief creative officer at The Mill in New York. “This is a pivotal moment for film VFX and the coming era of augmented reality production. Using Unreal’s cutting-edge game engine technology, filmmakers are able to see their photoreal digital assets on location in real time. It also means the audience can effect change in films in ways previously unimagined, giving interactive control over vehicles, characters and environments within a live action cinema experience. With Mill Cyclops, The Mill’s proprietary virtual production toolkit, we are able to render and integrate digital assets into the real world to a level never seen before.”

“Find New Roads is more than just a tagline at Chevrolet. We embrace that mission in the advanced engineering of our cars, and also in the way we service and communicate with our customers,” said Sam Russell, general director of Global Chevrolet Marketing. “‘The Human Race’ brings a lot of those ideals together. The technology involved in producing this film provides a glimpse into the future of customer engagement and could play a unique role in how we showcase car model options with interactive technologies like AR and VR.”

“We’re always thrilled to showcase the levels of innovation our customers can achieve in Unreal Engine,” said Kim Libreri, CTO, Epic Games. “Today’s presentation demonstrates what’s possible when combining live action with the power of Unreal Engine’s real-time photorealistic rendering capabilities – essentially taking the ‘post’ out of post-production.”

For more information about about “The Human Race,” see [youtu.be/2nWQ96ydO-I](https://youtu.be/2nWQ96ydO-I), Farah said.

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