Tech Center News®

WARREN, MICHIGAN

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Covers the Tech Center and the Immediate Area

NOVEMBER 13, 2017

GM Honors Vets with Program to Aid Wounded

veterans was held at the GM Tech Center in Warren last week.

Steve Hill, GM vice president of U.S. Sales and Service, spoke to a group of veterans and GM employees on the importance of companies like GM honoring veterans for their service to the country, veterans who served during a time of war and many of whom have paid a great price for their service.

That debt owed, Hill said, is why GM, through its GMC brand, has been working with the Stephen Siller Foundation, which was started by Siller's family after the New York fire fighter was killed during the events of 9/11.

Originally, the foundation helped rescue workers affected by the terrorist attack, but it has since expanded services to severely wounded veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.

GMC's contribution, Hill said, comes through its "Building For America's Bravest" (BFA) program.

The way the program works is that when GMC customers bring their vehicles to a GMC dealership for regular maintenance say a \$30 oil change – they are asked if they would like to contribute \$5 to BFA. The money is put on the bill, so a \$30 oil change becomes a \$35 one.

When the customer agrees, the

A special ceremony honoring GMC dealership matches that eterans was held at the GM contribution, so \$5 becomes \$10. And then GMC itself matches that \$10 contribution, so a \$5 contribution by a customer ends up raising a total of \$20 for the BFA program.

This money, Hill said, goes toward building "smart" houses for catastrophically wounded veter-

"When I say catastrophically, I mean a veteran who has lost three or more limbs in the line of duty," Hill said. "It costs about \$500,000 to build a single smart home. There are about 200 catastrophically wounded veterans on the waiting list.

"In 2016, we raised \$2 million through BFA and it looks like we'll raise \$2.5 million this year. That sounds like a lot of money, but \$2 million only helps four veterans."

Hill said the government's housing allowance of \$90,000 is nowhere near what a catastrophically wounded veteran needs to build a smart house, and it's up to the public, both regular citizens and corporate citizens like GM, to help fill the gap.

"I never use the word 'charity' when I talk about this program," Hill said. "We all owe it to these brave men and women for their sacrifice.

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Hill spoke to Tech Center employees and veterans about GMC's Building For America's Bravest program.

Detroit Readies for Christmas Tree Lighting

the Downtown Detroit Partnership (DDP) continues one of the city's most highly anticipated holiday celebrations – the annual Detroit Tree Lighting Ceremony. Brought to you by DTE Energy Foundation, the event will feature a Michigan-grown, 60-foot Norwegian Spruce wrapped in more than 19,000 multi-colored lights and ornaments.

The event begins at 5 p.m. and is free to the public, said DDP spokeswoman Teresa Siavrakas.

"The DTE Energy Foundation has been a proud sponsor of this iconic holiday tradition for 14 years, which helps to showcase the beauty of our city and draw visitors downtown throughout the season," said Faye Nelson, vice president, DTE Energy, and board chair and president of the DTE Energy Foundation.

"Our support of the tree lighting is one of the special ways we show our appreciation to the communities we serve, helping thousands of families create memories that will last a life-

U.S. Olympic medalist and four-time U.S. Figure Skating Champion Jeremy Abbott will headline the holiday ice show, Siavrakas said. The Colorado native began training at the Detroit Skating Club in Bloomfield Hills in 2009 and has skated alongside Olympic champions Kristi Yamaguchi and Scott Hamilton. Recently retired from the professional skating circuit, Abbott still tours internationally and will return from the Japan Open just in time to perform in Detroit.

Musical acts that will perform at the cermoney include Detroitrooted soulful funk band Jessica Hernandez & the Deltas and "DeDavis, an internationally recognized singer and songwriter.

Also on the bill is Grammynominated and internationally

For the 14th consecutive year, troit's Queen of Blues" Thornetta renowned R&B and Motown star

"This year's show will be an

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The annual Salvation Army Kettle in downtown Detroit



From left, Williams, Vatter and Raju speak at the Altran grand opening.

Paris-Based Altran Opens New Safety Center in Wixom

by Jim Stickford

The auto industry is changing more than it ever has, and this allowed Paris-based Altran - and other engineering companies an opportunity to get its foot in the door when it opened its World Class Center for Automotive Passive Safety in Wixom last

Keith Williams, group chief technology officer for Altran, said his firm is a global engineering company that does about \$2.4 billion worth of business in North America. About 10 percent of that is done for the auto indus-

try.
"We're specializing in developing passive safety engineering and virtual testing as well as vehicle component testing and building customized turnkey testing equipment," Williams

"Passive safety is all about re-

ducing the severity of events that are occurring. Air bags are passive safety systems. That's different from active safety systems, which try to prevent accidents – things like automatic brakes."

Car safety these days, Williams said, depends on a variety of technologies, one of which is new materials cars can be made out of. These new materials have to be lighter and just as strong, if not stronger than the metals they are replacing.

And having new materials and new technologies means OEMs have to have new equipment to put vehicles together.

"We opened this new facility at this time because the auto industry is undergoing massive change," Williams said. "This is an era of innovation and change. The number of things that impact

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Holiday Course at MSU Extension

Extension presents Greening the Holiday, a workshop where attendees will learn how to select and take care of their favorite holiday plants, learn how to choose a Christmas tree and how to get the most from decorative holiday greens.

In addition, attendees will make a holiday decoration to enjoy at home during the holidays. The class will be held 1-3 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 15, at the MSU Extension VerKuilen Building, 21885 Dunham Road (Entrance E), Clinton Township.

A \$15 per person material fee will be charged. Seating is limited and advance registration is required. Call the MSU Extension office at 586-469-6440 to register or for additional information.

Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) brings educational programs to residents, empowering them to improve their lives and community. Countybased MSUE staff, in concert with on-campus faculty members, serve residents with programming focused on agriculture and natural resources.

GM Pushes Efforts to Create Green Sites at Its Facilities

One doesn't have to have gone to Michigan State to say "go green" (though that doesn't hurt). Just ask the people at General Motors

As GM continues expanding its efforts to restore, protect and promote biodiversity, 11 more sites have earned Conservation Certification from the Wildlife Habitat Council, said GM spokeswoman Carolyn Markey.

The company is using its land, resources and partnerships to help address pressing global biodiversity issues.

GM now has an industry-leading 71 sites with WHC certification, driving the company to nearly 80 percent of its goal to achieve certification at all of its manufacturing sites by 2020, Markey said.

The efforts reduce environmental footprint, maximize benefits in the communities where GM operates and support the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal to halt biodiversity loss.

Education often plays a significant part of the sites' programs. For example, GM Brazil's Cruz Alta Proving Grounds - a newly certified site for 2017 - works with elementary school students to encourage environmental stewardship and share the importance of Atlantic Forest conservation.

When it is possible, General Motors aligns its biodiversity priorities with regional habitat plans and country conservation

global biodiversity progress brings value to our communities and our business," said Dane Parker, vice president, GM Global Facilities and Environmental. "Not only do these wildlife habitat activities allow us to contribute solutions to global challenges, they give us another

way to transform the environments where we live and work."

GM's biodiversity strategy drives business value, said Parker.

For example, GM facilities can avoid some costs through the reduced maintenance involved with no-mow landscaping zones and native plantings, and reduce their heating and cooling bills through green infrastructure, Parker said.

Effective and natural stormwater management also stabilizes ecosystems near company buildings.

The efforts have proven appealing to both the company's customers and new talent that General Motors is trying to attract, while creating places employees will want to be, Parker

Altogether, General Motors manages more than 5,000 acres of wildlife habitat in 14 different



Shipping crates have been repurposed at GM's Brownstown garden.

countries around the world. Wildlife Habitat Council part-

ners with corporations such as General Motors and their employees, as well as fellow conservation organizations, govern-

ment agencies and community members, to recognize and encourage new wildlife habitat projects for conservation, education and recreation purposes, Markey

Paris-Based Altran Opens New Safety Center

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

safety, from autonomous driving to other technologies, are huge.

This change means that engineering companies like Altran which also work in fields such as aeronautics, space & defense, rail & infrastructure improvement, energy, electronics, life sciences, and telecom & media can use their expertise to expand their presence in the automotive

Rob Vatter, CEO of Altran North America, said Detroit is the best place to be for any company wishing to obtain growth in the car sector. As to why the company chose Wixom, Vatter said that Altran's customers preferred that the company choose Oakland County as an excellent location, convenient to their businesses.

"The U.S. automotive market is now known for being on the cutting edge of innovation," Williams said. "A lot of the improvements to vehicles will require expertise in different fields. I have learned that the average car coming off the line today contains 100 million lines of computer code. There will be a lot of traveling between Detroit and Silicon Valley.'

The decision to build a new center in Detroit was finalized about a year ago, Vatter said. The business plan was completed in the first quarter of 2017 and the last bit of construction was completed on Nov. 8.

"When asked what my biggest surprise about setting up in Michigan, I have to say it was how the state has rebounded from the recession," Vatter said. "When I came here four or five years ago, I saw a lot of great buildings with empty parking lots. That meant no one was using them.

They are now filled. The state and businesses in the state have taken charge.'

Mohan Raju, head of Altran's Automotive North America, said because the company makes specialized manufacturing equipment. Altran has an understanding of how it works best and how OEMs can best use it.

"That is one of the valuable services that the company can provide to OEMs, as well as to Tier I, Tier II and Tier III

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COVERS THE TECH CENTER AND THE IMMEDIATE AREA

GM Honors Veterans

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"This is not charity, it's what they are due. The Siller Foundation has just scratched the surface of providing what help is needed. We are also doing a lot, but we can do so much more.'

Rick Kewley, Veteran Employee Resources Group executive champion, said helping veterans extends beyond the GMC program. It also means helping the veterans who have returned from war to transition into civilian life.

'We do have jobs," he said. "We have lots of stories about veterans who have come to work for GM, but once they get here, they have moved up. We are proud to have made this company a workplace of choice for our veterans.

In 2016, Kewley said, 5.2 percent of GM's hires were veterans. And those hires have been able to take advantage of programs like the GM Wingman effort. That is where new veteran hires can get together and speak among themselves about working for GM and learn about the company's culture.

Jon Alvarado, who is with GM's Veterans Group, spoke about helping vets transition from the military culture to GM's culture.

This transition can be difficult." Alvarado said. "They have to learn a new culture, a new language - we at GM have our set of words and phrases - and they have to meet new people.'



The 2018 Buick LaCrosse Avenir exterior shows refined design.



The 2018 Buick LaCrosse Avenir interior emphasizes luxury.

LaCrosse Avenir Finally Makes First Public Appearance

Buick's efforts to build itself up Buick," said Aldred. "With even as a worldwide luxury brand are continuing.

With the arrival of the 2018 LaCrosse Avenir, Buick's new sub-brand expands its offerings and provides customers a way to experience the highest expression of Buick luxury, regardless of whether they're shopping for a car or SUV, said Duncan Aldred, vice president of Global Buick and GMC.

First introduced with the 2018 Enclave that went on sale in October, Avenir features unique styling cues, an extensive set of standard features and exclusive premium materials for customers who want more, Aldred

"Nine out of ten LaCrosse buyers are choosing one of the top two trim levels – customers are signaling they want more from more content and an elegant look, Avenir adds a unique name and appearance for those who want the best of our attainable luxurv.

Like the Enclave Avenir, Aldred said the LaCrosse Avenir's design details were channeled from Buick's award-winning concept cars for a more dramatic look, expressed through a unique threedimensional mesh upper and lower grille paired with chrome wings.

Avenir script badging on the front doors and exclusive 19-inch Pearl Nickel or available 20-inch Midnight Silver wheels create a commanding road presence and complement the LaCrosse's timeless design.

"Exterior styling is very important to LaCrosse buvers, and its

sculpted beauty withstands pass-

ing trends," said Bob Boniface, Ebony interior, Intelligent Twinglobal director of Buick Exterior Design.

"For Avenir, we focused on maintaining the timelessness of the LaCrosse, while giving these customers subtle and tasteful details that elevate this car to a new level.'

Inside, Avenir-exclusive details include a Chestnut interior color theme, embroidered first-row headrests and Avenir-scripted sill plates, Boniface said.

Features available on other LaCrosse models come standard on the Avenir, including a powerful 310-horsepower V6. ninespeed automatic transmission, navigation and Bose's Centerpoint Surround Sound premium audio, as well as a panoramic moonroof.

Additional available features LaCrosse Avenir include

Clutch AWD, Dynamic Drive Package featuring continuous variable real-time dampening control and a suite of advanced safety features, Aldred said.

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The Buick LaCrosse Avenir will arrive at the brand's dealerships sometime in early 2018, Boniface said.



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FCA Foundation Aids Veterans with Grant

The FCA Foundation, the charitable arm of North American automaker FCA US, last week awarded \$250,000 to The Mission Continues and \$50,000 to Forgotten Harvest.

The grants will support community impact and workplace development initiatives for veterans who are adjusting to life at home.

"As a proud employer of more than 5,000 veterans, FCA US understands firsthand the contributions these men and women continue to make after their military service is complete," said Barbara Pilarski, head of Human Resources, FCA - North America, and Trustee, FCA Foundation.

"The FCA Foundation is pleased to offer grants to organizations that provide veterans opportunities to help themselves and their communities.'

FCA Foundation Veteran Support Grants include \$250,000 for The Mission Continues, which deploys veterans on new missions in their communities, so that their actions will inspire future generations to serve.

Operations in cities across the nation send veteran volunteers to work alongside nonprofit partners and community leaders to solve some of the most challenging community issues: improving community education resources, eliminating food deserts, mentoring at-risk youth and more.

"The Mission Continues is proud and excited to partner with the FCA Foundation and FCA US to empower more veterans across the country to serve again in their hometown," said Spencer Kympton, president, The Mission Continues.

"As a company who cares strongly and believes in the power of veterans here at home, we know that this partnership will strengthen our ability to engage more veterans across the coun-

try, as well as FCA US employee volunteers, to have a deep impact in local communities.'

The foundation has also donated \$50,000 to Forgotten Harvest's Workforce Development Program, which supports the growing food and agriculture sector in southeast Michigan by expanding the numbers of skilled men and women qualified for jobs and careers in the food and agriculture business sector.

The ultimate goal is to make sure everyone has a job after graduation. Veterans and others, who have had difficulty seeking employment for a variety of reasons, will learn about food processing, distribution, logistics and basic farming at Forgotten Harvest Farms.

"Forgotten Harvest is honored to receive FCA Foundation support for our collaborative workforce development program for veterans with barriers to employment," said Kirk Mayes, CEO, Forgotten Harvest.

"FCA's generous funding supports a food industry-focused program, which builds upon lessons learned in our 18-month pilot workforce development program."

The Mission Continues in Detroit, FCA spokesman Kevin Frazier said. FCA US volunteers joined The Mission Continues' Detroit 2nd Service Platoon for "Veterans Day Cody-Rouge Carry On" at Stein Park.

The mission at the park, adopted by Motor City Grounds Crew and The Mission Continues, includes hands-on revitalization and maintenance projects working alongside youth, community members and fellow veterans.

FCA US has several programs in place to support veterans, Frazier said. In 2011, FCA US joined forces with supplier Prestige Group, based in Clinton Township, to of-

fer a life-changing program for returning veterans, who earn engineering internship positions at FCA US while they finish their undergraduate degrees.

More than 100 veterans have taken advantage of this program, with eight having completed their degrees.

FCA US received Silver Status as a Michigan Friendly Employer by the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency in recognition of recruitment strategies aimed at veterans, Frazier said.

The company's Belvidere Assembly Plant teamed up with PepsiCo Recycling to support PepsiCo Recycling's partnership with the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities.

FCA US also received the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve's prestigious Freedom award for its exceptional support of enlisted employees.

FCA US currently has 23 employees on active military leave, with 434 currently serving as active or inactive reservists and guardsmen. More than 5,100 employees are military veterans.

VW, Google Get Quantum

BERLIN (AP) - Volkswagen and Google are cooperating in exploring uses in the auto industry for quantum computers. Quantum computing, a technology that's still in its early phases, uses the quirks of quantum physics to perform calculations at far higher speeds than current computers.

VW said Nov. 7 the companies will work together using Google quantum computers, developing algorithms and simulations.

VW said it will use quantum computers for exploring structures for new materials.



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Google, AutoNation Form Autonomous Tech Alliance

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) - Google is partnering with Auto-Nation, the country's largest auto dealership chain, in its push to produce self-driving cars for wide use.

AutoNation said Nov. 2 that its dealerships will provide maintenance and repairs for Waymo's self-driving fleet of Chrysler Pacifica vehicles. Waymo is Google's automated vehicle technology wing. The agreement will include additional models of vehicles when Waymo brings them on

Terms of the multi-year deal were not disclosed.

Google started off with a fleet of 100 autonomous Pacificas and has announced plans to add 500. Waymo is negotiating with other automakers, such as Honda, about autonomous vehicle systems, the company said.

The vehicles likely will be driven for several hundred thousand miles, and they'll need to be maintained to accomplish that, AutoNation CEO Mike Jackson said Nov. 2 in an interview.

The dealership chain, he said, has maintained more than 40 million vehicles. "As Waymo moves to other markets and also puts other brands in service, we have expertise on any vehicle they want to put into service," Jackson said.

Waymo has been partnering with a number of car-centric companies like Avis, the ridesharing company Lyft, and Fiat Chrysler.

Since Google first began pursuing self-driving vehicle technology in 2009, a wave of major players have joined the chase.

General Motors and Ford, along with other big technology companies, including Apple and ride-hailing service Uber, are developing their own technology.

Waymo is in a legal tussle with Uber, alleging that one of its former managers stole its trade secrets and took them along when he joined Uber in 2016. The trial is set to begin later this year.

AutoNation Inc., based in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., runs about 360 dealerships in the U.S.

BLM Group Helps Veterans

Wixom-based BLM Group USA, We look forward to bringing a global manufacturer of tube processing solutions has announced its corporate involvement with "Workshops for Warriors.'

Warriors Workshops for (www.wfwusa.org) is a statelicensed, board-governed, fully audited 501(c)(3) nonprofit school that trains, certifies, and helps place veterans, wounded warriors, and transitioning service members into advanced manufacturing careers such as welding, CAD/CAM programming and machining, said BLM Group spokesman Ed Szykula.

BLM Group USA has committed to sponsoring a student who is currently enrolled in the "Machining for Warriors" program, with the intent to hire that individual as a field service technician upon course completion, Szykula said.

"It's an honor for our company to be involved with Workshops for Warriors," said Dr. Jeffrey Ahrstrom, president and COO of BLM Group USA.

The sacrifices and abilities of our veteran population is nothing short of remarkable. The training is rigorous and comprehensive; graduates are immediately employable as welders, machinists, service engineers, or CNC programmers. As a Marine, I'm proud to work for a company supporting our veterans and this program. As a business leader, I'm eager to support the next generation of engineers, machinists, and business executives.

these very capable, hard-chargers into our organization."

BLM Group's product line, Szykula said, includes laser tube cutting, cold sawing, bending, end-forming, end-machining and wire bending machines. The company has more than 60 years of experience and thousands of applications in the development of tube and sheet metal fabrication equipment.

Tesla Purchases Auto Supplier

DETROIT (AP) - Electric car company Tesla Inc. is buying Perbix, a Minnesota-based maker of highly automated manufacturing equipment.

Perbix has been a supplier to Tesla for three years. It has built custom machinery for Tesla's Fremont, Calif., assembly plant as well as its battery plant in Nevada. Perbix will continue to be based north of Minneapolis. It currently employs 150, but Tesla says it will recruit more.

Tesla didn't say how much the deal is worth. Company CEO Elon Musk has said he is determined to make Tesla's factories more efficient, and the machines Perbix makes are part of that effort. Tesla has made multiple acquisitions in recent years to boost its manufacturing exper-

It bought a Michigan parts stamping plant in 2015 and a German engineering firm in 2016.







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Downtown Detroit Readying For Christmas Tree Lighting

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

experience unlike any yet," said Robert Gregory, Chief Public Spaces Officer, Downtown Detroit Partnership.

"Spectacular city views plus award-winning, home-grown entertainment is sure to leave a lasting impression with the crowds. Jeremy Abbott, Hernandez, Davis and KEM are just a few of the performers who have strong ties to Detroit. It will truly be a celebration of our great city."

The evening's entertainment will also feature performances by noteworthy local musical groups, including the Metropolitan Detroit Chorale, whose 80 vocalists and 20-piece orchestra have performed at New York's Carnegie Hall, said Siavrakas.

Alongside them, the internationally known Detroit Concert Choir boasts 70 singers that represent 35 communities in the tricounty area.

The Casali Holiday Dancers will take the stage for the first time at the Detroit Tree Lighting. Rounding out the show on stage, Make-A-Wish Michigan will present a solo vocal performance by 16-year-old Farmington Hills resident Kevin

Supporting Jeremy Abbott on ice will be metro Detroit's most prominent figure skating groups including his alma mater, the Detroit Skating Club. Like Abbott, Detroit Skating Club alumni have competed in U.S. Figure Skating and World Championships, as well as Winter Olympics, since 1949.

Not to be forgotten, Siavrakas said, nationally recognized Dearborn Senior Crystallettes will

perform along with The University of Michigan Skating Club, which is ranked second among both college clubs and varsity programs in the nation.

Festivities will begin at 5 p.m. The Salvation Army giant Red Kettle will be lit at 6:30 p.m. and will include a musical performance by KEM to kick off the organization's \$1 million fundraising campaign.

Other activities will include carriage rides along Woodward Avenue, The Salvation Army Family Fun Tent, photos with Santa, free hot chocolate from DTE Energy Foundation, a drink at the Winter Fountain, and much more.

Detroit's Christmas Tree will be lit just before 8 p.m. The official Rink Opening Party kicks off at 9 p.m. with a live concert by Hernandez and The Deltas. Channel 955 will take over with a live music mix from 10 p.m. to midnight.

New this year, in response to the anticipated crowd of more than 40,000, a larger main stage will be built on Monroe, and a state-of-the-art sound system and LED video wall will ensure Detroit's Annual Tree Lighting continues to be one of the best in the nation, said Siavrakas.

The 14th Annual Detroit Tree Lighting Ceremony and show will be streamed LIVE on WXYZ.com and broadcast LIVE on WXYZ-TV Channel 7 from 7 to 8 p.m.

The tree lighting marks the beginning of the Detroit holiday season, which includes public skating at the Campus Martius ice rink and the Season of Winter Magic sponsored by Quicken Loans.

The full program will be announced soon.





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