

2017 Witnessed Detroit Automakers Setting New Paths

by Jim Stickford

2017 was a busy year for the auto industry – a year in which the Detroit Three made big changes in leadership, invested in technology and the way they do business.

Among the biggest changes was the sale of the Opel and Vauxhall brands by General Motors to the French PSA Group.

On March 6, GM released a

statement declaring that the company was selling the two European brands for \$2.3 billion.

“We are very pleased that together, GM, our valued colleagues at Opel/Vauxhall and PSA have created a new opportunity to enhance the long-term performance of our respective companies by building on the success of our prior alliance”, said Mary T. Barra, GM chairman and chief executive officer. “For GM,

this represents another major step in the ongoing work that is driving our improved performance and accelerating our momentum. We are reshaping our company and delivering consistent, record results for our owners through disciplined capital allocation to our higher-return investments in our core automotive business and in new technologies that are enabling us to lead the future of personal mobility.

“We believe this new chapter puts Opel and Vauxhall in an even stronger position for the long term and we look forward to our participation in the future success and strong value-creation potential of PSA through our economic interest and continued collaboration on current and exciting new projects.”

The announcement attracted much comment across the media. The Web site Motley Fool noted that General Motors has been on a long losing streak in Europe. The last time it earned a profit there, it was still the twentieth century.

Since 2000, GM has lost nearly \$20 billion in Europe, the Web

site noted. “It had initially expected to reach breakeven in Europe during 2016, but the negative impact of Brexit caused it to post a \$257 million loss. Due to the ongoing impact of Brexit, General Motors previously disclosed that it would lose money in Europe again in 2017 before hopefully reaching profitability in 2018.

“Pundits often contrast GM’s perennial losses in Europe to Ford’s recent recovery in the region. Yet Ford isn’t making money hand-over-fist there. While Ford Europe earned a record profit during 2016, its 4.2 percent operating margin was nothing to write home about. Furthermore,

a change in Ford’s pension accounting has played a big role in its return to profitability in Europe.”

Barra was asked about the move at a special end-of-year conference hosted by the Automotive Press Association. She said that the days of GM making moves based on the notion of being big for the sake of being big are over. Now GM will look at return on investment and whether the move makes sense to the company as a steward of its investors’ money.

Across town at Ford, the company kicked off 2017 in January

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Mary Barra helped promote female coders back in September.

Ford to Detroit: Coming Back for the Future

Ford Motor Company revealed plans to move its key autonomous vehicle and electric vehicle business and strategy teams to the city where the company got its start.

Ford made the announcement earlier in December and is moving the teams to a historic building known as The Factory – a recently refurbished industrial complex with a 110-year history – in Detroit’s Corktown neighborhood, said Ford spokesman Said Deep.

The Motor City location, which will be up and running early next year, will enable Ford teams to immerse themselves in urban mobility challenges and solutions.

“We’re excited to choose this inspirational location in one of Detroit’s resurgent neighborhoods to accelerate our work on electric and autonomous vehicles,” said Jim Hackett, Ford president and CEO.

“This move and our exciting Dearborn campus transformation are important steps as we move toward our aspiration to become the world’s most trusted mobility company – designing smart vehicles for a smart world.”

The Corktown location holds special meaning for Executive Chairman Bill Ford, whose ancestors emigrated from County Cork, Ireland, to the Dearborn, Mich., area years ago, Deep said.

Corktown, Detroit’s oldest neighborhood, derives its name from immigrants from County Cork who settled there.

“Returning to Detroit is particularly meaningful, because it is where my great-grandfather originally set out to pursue his pas-

sion and where we have always called our home,” said Ford.

“We are planting a special piece of our company’s future in one of the city’s great neighborhoods, because we believe in Detroit, its people and what we can build together.”

The move is more than a relocation – it’s a strategic decision aligned with a mission, Deep

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This old Corktown factory will soon be home to a Ford facility.

Delphi Spinoff Aptiv Going in New Direction

by DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Auto Writer

TROY, Mich. (AP) – Delphi has long been active in the fast-growing autonomous vehicle market. Its spinoff of Aptiv may speed things up even more.

Delphi Technologies, which itself was spun off by General Motors Co. in 1999, will continue to make car parts, including gasoline and electric engines.

Aptiv, recently spun off by Delphi, will focus on self-driving vehicles and the software and hardware needed to run them.

Chief Technology Officer Glen De Vos says Aptiv split so it can be more nimble and pursue relationships that are different than the traditional one between auto suppliers and the automakers to whom they sell parts.

Aptiv wants to supply automated driving systems to automakers, fleet operators and even cities that can use them on buses or shuttles. In Singapore, where it’s operating automated taxis with backup drivers, it intends to have a fully self-driving taxi by 2020 or 2021.

The company also wants to re-

tain control of some of the data that the systems collect so it can constantly improve and update them and make money by selling the data, said De Vos.

“We have to be part of that broader ecosystem that’s using the car as a digital platform as opposed to just supplying components that go into it,” De Vos told reporters at a recent event at Aptiv’s U.S. headquarters near Detroit.

Here are more De Vos comments, edited for length:

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The 2018 Cadillac ATS-V

Cadillac Presents Two New Editions in Honor of Racing

Success on the race track is translating into new faces in the showroom.

To celebrate winning the 2017 IMSA Manufacturer, Driver, Team and Endurance Championships, Cadillac has created a Championship Edition for all three of its ultra-high-performance models – the 2018 Cadillac ATS-V coupe and sedan, and the 2018 Cadillac CTS-V super sedan, said GM spokesman JL Lavina.

And to make sure that owners can handle the power and get the most out of the vehicles’ performance, new Cadillac V-Series models include tuition and accommodation at the two-day Cadillac V-Performance Academy at Spring Mountain, Nev., Lavina said. The offer is valid for one year, reserved for the original owner of each new, unused model year 2017 and newer Cadillac ATS-V and CTS-V models.

The special edition models celebrate Cadillac’s first-ever endurance racing Manufacturer’s Championship, secured in the first year of the brand’s return to the long-distance sport, Lavina said.

The Championship Editions of the ATS-V and CTS-V super sedan is available in Black Raven or Crystal White Tricoat exterior paint with Cadillac V-Performance graphics located on hood and rear spoiler, Red Obsession side-view mirror caps, DPI-V.R graphic on the quarter windows, Red Brembo brake calipers and forged polish-finished alloy V-Series wheels with Midnight Silver painted pockets.

Highlighting the interior of the Championship Edition is the Morello Red interior detail package that includes Jet Black RECARO race-inspired seats, red

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New COO Named At BorgWarner Of Auburn Hills

BorgWarner of Auburn Hills has appointed Frédéric Lissalde to the position of executive vice president and chief operating officer, effective Jan. 1, 2018.

He will be responsible for the operations of the company with the business presidents reporting to him. He will report to James Verrier, president and CEO, said BorgWarner spokeswoman Michelle Collins.

Lissalde, 50, has held positions of increasingly significant responsibility during his eighteen years with the company, Collins said.

He most recently served as president and general manager of Turbo Systems, the company’s largest business. Prior to that he served as vice president and general manager of BorgWarner Transmissions Systems and vice president of global sales and marketing of BorgWarner Drivetrain Systems. Lissalde holds a Masters of Engineering degree from ENSAM – Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts et Metiers – Paris and an MBA from HEC Paris.

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Warren Library Celebrating Civil Rights

“Coretta Scott King, Rosa Parks, Dorothy Heights – these are just a few of the famous female crusaders in the civil rights movement,” said Warren librarian Amy Nelson. “Join Caitlyn Perry Dial, Ph.D., executive director of Michigan Women’s Historical Center & Hall of Fame as she presents ‘Courage in Action: Stories of Michigan Women in the Civil Rights Movement’ at the Miller Library branch on Thursday, Jan. 18, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.”

This program will be held in the cafeteria (room 420) of the Warren Community Center, Nelson said. Registration is required.

The Miller Branch Library is located at 5460 Arden in the Warren Community Center (between 14 Mile and Chicago, west of Mound).

For more information on the program and to reserve a space, Nelson said that people should call the Miller branch of the library at 586-751-5377.

Ford Opening Up a Facility in Corktown Neighborhood

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said. The company is committed to helping improve the entire system of transporting people and goods, especially in cities facing major challenges such as congestion, pollution, accidents and other transportation issues that affect everything from productivity to quality of life, he said.

The Corktown relocation means employees will be working in the heart of these challenges, experiencing life firsthand in one of the nation’s burgeoning urban neighborhoods. More than 220 employees will be working at the new location.

The move to Detroit is both a nod toward the past and a bold look forward, Deep said. It allows Ford to reaffirm its commitment to a city where its journey first began.

“Having these teams together in a dedicated facility in the heart of Detroit is truly a full-circle moment for Ford,” said Jim Farley, Ford executive vice president and president, Global Markets. “It’s such a conducive environment for sharing ideas, for collaboration, and for accelerating our electric vehicle efforts. We have such a great team, and we’ll be hearing more from them in the coming months.”

The team in Corktown will be led by Sherif Marakby, Ford vice president of autonomous vehicles and electrification, Deep said. Marakby is a Ford veteran who first joined the company in 1990, leaving briefly for a stint in Silicon Valley.

Ford is focused on driving its electric vehicle business forward, both with hybrid vehicles and full battery-electric vehicles with research led by Ford’s Team Edison, Marakby said. The team is working to accelerate both the

development and adoption of electric vehicles.

Team Edison also is focused on fostering partnerships with other companies to deliver smart solutions, following Ford’s global lead. Ford recently created an electric vehicle partnership with Zotye, creating Zotye Ford Automobile Co., a 50-50 joint venture that will offer a range of stylish and affordable electric vehicles for consumers in China.

Ford already has a variety of active partnerships related to the future of mobility, Deep said. With Ford’s \$1 billion investment in Argo AI, the company is advancing autonomous vehicle development by combining its autonomous vehicle expertise with Argo AI’s robotics experi-

ence and startup speed on artificial intelligence software.

Ford’s autonomous vehicle business is built around deploying self-driving vehicles in partnership with leading companies that serve the movement of both people and goods, Deep said. Working with these partners, such as Lyft and Domino’s Pizza, Ford is conducting research and building out the infrastructure that will help in determining the design of the self-driving vehicle and the customer experience it will enable.

Planned for production beginning in 2021, Deep said Ford’s first autonomous vehicle is a new hybrid-electric vehicle with self-driving capability. It will be optimized to meet the needs of

Ford’s partners to enhance and grow their business operations – and to deliver the best experience for the people they serve.

Key factors are:

- Commercial-grade quality for lower cost of ownership and improved durability to operate in tough urban environments.

- Hybrid-electric powertrain to help reduce emissions and achieve maximum mileage to keep the self-driving vehicle on the road longer.

- Purposely designed for ride-hailing and delivery customer needs.

- Dependable from the outset, integrated for safety by the teams that are engineering, testing and ultimately building Ford’s self-driving vehicles.

Delphi Spinoff Aptiv Going in New Direction

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Q. You have so many partners, like BMW and Intel. Why should Aptiv control the data?

A. In some cases, you do share. Absolutely.

But, ultimately, we want to be controlling how that sharing is done. What gives us a position of control, if you will, is having the automated driving system, the thing that actually makes the car work.

If you own that and you control that, you are in a much better position to control and influence everything around it.

That’s actually been one of the learnings we’ve had over the past year. We see a lot of people that do other things that are now trying to move into automated driving. That’s the hardest thing to do.

We actually started there and we’re now moving into the other

spaces that surround automated driving that enable the service to be provided.

It puts us in a much stronger position.

Q. How will automated driving change the car market?

A. There’s not a unanimity of opinion about what will happen to sales as automation comes on to the market. But, in general, however you do the math, your car is a horribly underutilized asset.

Automation brings in the ability to drive up more efficient utilization of that capital asset. Now, that in turn says, I need a lot less cars.

At the same time, I burn through them a lot faster, because the life of a car is miles de-

pendent, not time dependent. So there’s been a lot of analysis showing that I’m going to need a lot more cars. It also may force more commoditization of the car itself.

Q. When will we first see Aptiv systems operating on a larger scale?

A. We’re going to engage with cities – Boston, Singapore, Las Vegas, some others – to help operationalize micro transit or public transportation services because it gets the platform on the road, you get cycles of learning, you can actually commercialize quickly.

But the broader market is going to be the private ride-hailing services so we need to participate in that market as well.

Cadillac Racing Success Fosters Special Editions

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front and rear door armrests and Morello accented high gloss carbon fiber interior trim, Lavina said.

Other interior features by Cadillac include the Performance Data Recorder with Cosworth Toolbox, sunroof, the industry leading Rear Camera Mirror and next-generation Cadillac user experience.

The new Cadillac V-Performance DPi-V.R prototype race car, Lavina said, began the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season with seven-straight race wins and secured the Manufacturer’s Championship by winning seven of the 10 races, including the “36 Hours of Florida,” which includes wins of the Rolex 24 at Daytona and the Twelve Hours of Sebring early in the season.

Before this season’s dramatic return to endurance racing, the Cadillac brand had a 14-year hiatus from the sport.

Cadillac was focusing efforts on sprint-format GT racing in eleven seasons of the Pirelli World Challenge, where Cadillac amassed 33 race wins, 121 podium finishes, 25 pole positions, five Manufacturer Championships, and six Driver Championships, including the 2017 SprintX Championship.

Cadillac placed three cars in IMSA’s Prototype category for the 2017 IMSA season, Lavina said – the No. 10 Konica Minolta Cadillac DPi-V.R driven full-time by Jordan and Ricky Taylor; the No. 5 Mustang Sampling Cadillac DPi-V.R driven by Joao Barbosa and Christian Fittipaldi; and the No. 31 Whelen Engineering Cadillac DPi-V.R driven by Eric Curran and Dane Cameron.

The three vehicles became available for sale in late December, Lavina said.

The 2018 Cadillac Championship Edition ATS-V sedans will start at \$72,190 and coupes at \$74,390.

The 2018 CTS-V Championship Edition sedans will start at \$105,730.

That price includes the destination freight charges but excludes tax, title, license and dealer fees.

In total, 200 Championship Editions will be built by Cadillac and are available for sale in North America.



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by unveiling seven of the 13 new global electrified vehicles it plans to introduce in the next five years, including hybrid versions of the iconic F-150 pickup and Mustang in the U.S., a plug-in hybrid Transit Custom van in Europe and a fully electric SUV with an expected range of at least 300 miles for customers globally.

The automaker also announced plans to invest \$700 million to expand its Flat Rock Assembly Plant in Michigan into a factory that will build high-tech autonomous and electric vehicles along with the Mustang and Lincoln Continental.

The investments and expansion will create 700 direct new jobs.

The moves are part of a \$4.5 billion investment in electrified vehicles by 2020, offering customers greater fuel efficiency, capability and power across Ford's global vehicle lineup.

The plans are part of the company's expansion to be an auto and a mobility company, including leading in development of electrified and autonomous vehicles and providing new mobility solutions.

"As more and more consumers around the world become interested in electrified vehicles, Ford is committed to being a leader in providing consumers with a broad range of electrified vehicles, services and solutions that make people's lives better," said Mark Fields, who was Ford president and CEO at the time of the announcements.

"Our investments and expanding lineup reflect our view that global offerings of electrified vehicles will exceed gasoline-powered vehicles within the next 15 years."

But while Fields unveiled this plan to the public at large in the year 2017, he will not be at Ford to see it put into action.

On May 22, Ford Motor Company named Jim Hackett as its new president and CEO and announced key global leadership changes designed to further strengthen its core automotive business and accelerate a strategic shift to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

The press release announcing the change stated that Hackett, 62, "has a long track record of innovation and business success as CEO of Steelcase, Interim Athletic Director at the University of Michigan and executive chairman of Ford Smart Mobility since March 2016."

"We're moving from a position of strength to transform Ford for the future," Bill Ford said. "Jim Hackett is the right CEO to lead Ford during this transformative period for the auto industry and the broader mobility space. He's a true visionary who brings a unique, human-centered leadership approach to our culture, products and services that will unlock the potential of our people and our business."

The release also stated that Hackett, together with Bill Ford, will focus on three priorities:

- Sharpening operational execution across the global business to further enhance quality, go-to-market strategy and product launch, while decisively addressing underperforming parts of the business.

- Modernizing Ford's business, using new tools and techniques to unleash innovation,



One of 100 test vehicles built by Fiat Chrysler for Silicon Valley's Waymo.

speed decision making and improve efficiency. This includes increasingly leveraging big data, artificial intelligence, advanced robotics, 3D printing and more.

- Transforming the company to meet future challenges, ensuring the company has the right corporate culture, talent, strategic processes and nimbleness to succeed as society's needs and consumer behavior change over time.

At FCA, the company entered the hybrid/EV market in a big way with the launch of the 2017 Pacifica Hybrid minivan, which reached dealers beginning in April.

At the time of its release, the company, in a statement to the media, said "the 2017 Chrysler Pacifica reinvents the minivan segment with an unprecedented

level of functionality, versatility, technology and bold styling.

Re-engineered from the ground up on an all-new platform, the Pacifica delivers class-leading gasoline and hybrid powertrains to the minivan segment.

"The Pacifica Hybrid takes this revolutionary vehicle a step further with its class-exclusive, innovative hybrid powertrain. It's the first electrified vehicle in the minivan segment and achieves 84 miles per gallon equivalent (MPGe) in electric-only mode and 33 miles of all-electric range."

But FCA's investment in new technology for the Pacifica minivan didn't end with the introduction of hybrid powertrain systems.

The company also worked with Waymo, Google's automotive tech spin-off company.



Ford's new CEO Hackett (left) with Bill Ford

On April 25 Waymo stated that it was adding 500 Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid minivans to expand its self-driving program.

FCA previously delivered 100 minivans, modified for self-driving, to Waymo during the second half of 2016.

FCA announced in April that production of the additional 500 minivans would ramp up beginning in the month of May. Waymo then outfitted these additional 500 vehicles with its self-driving technology.

Waymo also unveiled plans in 2017 that it was inviting members of the public to use its fleet of self-driving vehicles for everyday travel.

Waymo's early rider program was able to give selected Phoenix

residents the opportunity to experience the self-driving Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid minivans for the first time.

Information about Waymo's early rider program can be found at waymo.com/apply.

"The collaboration between FCA and Waymo has been advantageous for both companies as we continue to work together to fully understand the steps needed to bring self-driving vehicles to market," said Sergio Marchionne, Chief Executive Officer, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles.

"The addition of 500 Chrysler Pacifica Hybrid minivans is a further acknowledgement of the hard work put forth by both engineering teams."

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Ford Fund's \$1.2M Helps Puerto Rican Hurricane Victims

Ford Motor Company Fund is investing more than \$1.2 million for expanded disaster relief efforts in Puerto Rico and spearheading a collaboration with nonprofits to bring much-needed vehicles, supplies and services to hurricane-devastated communities on the island.

Organized as a multiyear social mobility program, the Ford-led Centro de Movilidad Social will connect children and families with a range of services – from basic needs such as food, water, clothing and transportation, to longer-term recovery assistance through educational grants and job skills development programs, said Ford spokeswoman Maria Ibañez.

“This effort is at the heart of Ford Fund’s mission to provide opportunities and access for people in need,” said Jim Vella, president, Ford Motor Company Fund – the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company.

“Centro de Movilidad Social allows us to expand our ongoing efforts to help rebuild the lives of thousands of Puerto Ricans following Hurricane Maria.”

The program began in December at Centros Sor Isolina Ferré in Ponce, where families can access food, water and other basic necessities, learn new skills, and engage with their community members in recovery efforts, Ibañez said.

Ford donated three immediate-response vehicles – two Transit Connect cargo vans and an F-150 – to travel across the island as pop-up mobile resource centers helping The Salvation Army and Red Cross Puerto Rico deliver food, water, clothing, shoes, medical assistance and educational resources to people in need.

Ford’s investment includes 10,000 new books for students, plus water filters complete with guidance on how to clean water for use at home, Ibañez said.

In 2018, Centro de Movilidad Social will expand to provide multiple temporary community centers across the island.

Additional educational and technology resources are in development to further assist with long-term and strategic recovery efforts.

As part of Ford’s broader outreach, the company announced the winners of the Ford College Community Challenge in Puerto Rico, Ibañez said.

The program is designed to empower students at higher education organizations to catalyze community-building projects that address pressing local needs.

Earlier this year, students were invited to design a strategy to support the ongoing efforts to help rebuild Puerto Rico, Ibañez said.

The following student teams will receive grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 to implement their plans:

- First place – University of Puerto Rico representing Rena-Cen, an eco-tourism and environmental conservation project in Luquillo.
- Second place – Humacao Community College representing Habitat.
- Third place – National University College in Bayamón representing Atabey, a community project to promote an entrepreneurial ecosystem in Cataño.

“Puerto Rico has always been important for Ford and we stand committed to continue helping local communities with



Ford made three student grants to help those in Puerto Rico who have been affected by Hurricane Maria.

resources, services, and access to basic needs,” said Gabriel López, president and CEO of Ford Mexico, who oversees Ford’s operations in Puerto Rico.

“After bringing direct relief to communities with Ruta Solidaria Ford, our social mobility centers will be part of our contribution toward a long-term recovery for the Island.”

Vella said Centro de Movilidad Social is modeled after Ford Resource and Engagement Centers in Detroit and South Africa, where Ford brings together nonprofit groups to provide basic needs, educational services, job training, safe driving programs and other initiatives to meet community needs.

“Working with long-standing partners like The Salvation Army, Red Cross and others, we saw an opportunity to replicate some of our existing assistance models and bring them to an area where there’s an urgent need,” said Vella.

“By leveraging the strengths, experience and programs we have in place elsewhere, we hope to have a greater and more immediate impact in disaster recovery efforts in Puerto Rico.”

Over the past seven years, Ford has invested more than \$1.5 million in communities in Puerto Rico through Operation Better World.

Centro de Movilidad Social is an extension of the disaster assistance efforts Ford has undertaken in the year 2017, Vella said.

Immediately following the devastation of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, Ford activated its disaster relief efforts to match contributions to the American Red Cross – up to \$300,000 for each hurricane.

FCA's JNAP Employees Made Holiday Special This Year

Who doesn’t want to have the opportunity to be a real Santa Claus? Certainly not the employees at Fiat Chrysler’s Jefferson North Assembly Plant (JNAP) in Detroit.

The 25th annual Put a Smile on a Child’s Face event, hosted by JNAP, where the plant’s employees passed out gifts to local families and children that they’ve “adopted” during the Christmas

season, took place on Sunday, Dec. 17.

In total, approximately 90 families attended the event, including 250 children. New this year, the plant adopted 63 girls from Alternatives for Girls, a local nonprofit dedicated to helping homeless and high-risk girls as well as young women, said FCA spokeswoman Val Oehmke.

Gifts that were given out included clothes, food vouchers and toys from each child’s wish list.

Children in attendance met and took pictures with Santa, Oehmke said.

In addition to the gifts, breakfast and lunch were provided to families who attended the event, Oehmke said.

“Put a Smile on a Child’s Face is one of the most significant, gratifying events that is organized not just by Jefferson North leadership, but by team members and team leaders. It is a home-grown activity right here at the plant that has expanded bigger and bigger for the last 25 years,” said Zach Leroux, Jefferson North Assembly Plant manager.

“The Put a Smile on a Child’s Face is an event for children who are less fortunate, for whom parents may not have funds to provide gifts for their children. It’s a great way for Jefferson North employees to give back to their community,” said Reggie Griffin, UAW Local 7 president.

Aleeya Moody, a JNAP team leader, said she and her team enjoyed what they did, putting forth the effort to help raise money for the project, and making sure that those without got to enjoy a nice holiday.

“This year, my team adopted a six-year-old boy and we cannot wait to see his face when he opens his gifts,” Moody said.

“This is my second year participating in Put a Smile on a Child’s Face,” said Bernard Thorton, Jefferson North Assembly team leader.

“This year my team adopted a family of seven children. To see the smiles on the parents’ and children’s faces is a heartwarming feeling.”



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HELLA's New HQ Should be Ready by 2019

The automotive lighting and electronics company HELLA has reinforced its presence in the United States.

The automotive supplier will open a new administrative and technical center in Northville, at the beginning of 2019, said HELLA spokesman Markus Richter. The new, modernized facility will be at least 115,000 square feet and will address the company's continued growth, as well as provide flexibility to adapt to dynamic marketplace shifts in the coming years.

Official groundbreaking was in November, Richter said.

HELLA's U.S. headquarters and technical center will replace its existing U.S. headquarters in Plymouth Township, approximately three miles away, Richter said.

Within the next two years, the number of employees there is expected to expand from currently 350 to approximately 400.

The focus of activities is on developing electronics products and lighting technology solutions. The location also houses company functions, such as purchasing, sales and information management, as well as finance and controlling for the North American region.

"With the new location, we will create an important foundation for further pursuing our growth path in the North American market," says Steve Liettaert, president of HELLA Corporate Center USA. "We will have more space for required additional resources, while also being able to further optimize the work

environment for our employees."

The new location will implement a flexible and open office concept with modern office equipment, project rooms, meeting areas, lounge and cafeteria sections as well as fitness activities for employees.

To bring the project to fruition, HELLA has partnered with Michigan-based REDICO as the developer, Biddison Architecture + Design and Amson Development, Richter said.

HELLA is a global, family-owned company, listed on the stock exchange, with around 38,000 employees at over 125 locations in some 35 countries. The HELLA Group develops and manufactures products for lighting technology and electronics for the automotive industry

Auburn Hills Firm Opens New Site in China

Henniges Automotive, an Auburn Hills-based global supplier of highly engineered sealing and anti-vibration systems for the automotive market, opened a new, scalable 79,500-square-foot facility in Suzhou, China on Dec. 20.

The plant is located in the Taicang Port Economic and Technological Development Zone that gives Henniges the ability to grow the facility to double its size to support future business growth, said Henniges spokesman Jon Penvose.

Customers, Chinese government officials and Henniges executives recently joined together in Suzhou for a grand opening ceremony to officially commemorate the milestone, Penvose said.

"As the automotive industry evolves at an unprecedented pace, having flexibility in our facilities, operations and capabilities is an advantage that makes

us more agile and responsive to our customers," said Larry Williams, president of Henniges Automotive. "In addition to changing industry demands, we've seen significant business growth in the Asia-Pacific region, which is why we have strategically designed a facility that meets our customers' current needs and can grow with them and us."

This plant will feature both TPV (thermoplastic) and EPDM (traditional) rubber sealing and will have state-of-the-art equipment that meets Henniges' global standards, Penvose said. A quality management system, which uses an electronic display system integrated with the company's enterprise resource planning systems to provide instantaneous feedback, will be a key asset at the new plant.

The opening of the facility is now one of seven manufacturing plants in China, and the compa-

ny's first in the Shanghai region, Penvose said. With this addition, Henniges now has 23 facilities worldwide, including five research and development centers and 18 production sites.

"This is an exciting expansion of our global footprint and one that will help us further establish our best practices in global engineering and strengthen our automotive sealing systems capabilities everywhere we do business," said Williams. "As a company that has provided sealing and anti-vibration technologies for more than 100 years, we pride ourselves on efficiently delivering solutions to our customers and tailoring our products to meet local standards; southern China will be no different."

Henniges has plans for further expansions in 2018, including a new manufacturing plant in South America and expanding an engineering facility in Europe.

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Edmunds Ranks Automotive Safety Systems for Buyers

(AP) – We are in a new era of car safety. The Web site Edmunds has noted that the focus has shifted from reducing death and injury in a vehicle collision to preventing a crash from happening in the first place. Safety features designed to avoid accidents are becoming increasingly common in new cars. Here is an overview done by Edmunds of the advanced safety features consumers are likely to encounter when shopping for a new car, along with examples of what carmakers call their versions of the features.

FORWARD COLLISION WARNING: If you come up behind a slower or stopped vehicle and don't show signs of braking, the forward collision warning system will alert you that an impact is imminent. Some carmaker names for this feature include Predictive Forward Collision Warning (Infiniti), Forward Collision Alert (Chevrolet) and Forward Obstruction Warning (Mazda).

SHOULD YOU GET IT? Yes. Distracted driving is at an all-time high, and this system can serve as an extra set of eyes to prevent an accident. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommends the technology.

AUTOMATIC EMERGENCY BRAKING: This system will become a standard feature on nearly all cars and light trucks by 2022, thanks to an agreement among most carmakers and NHTSA. If the vehicle senses an imminent collision, the system will automatically apply the brakes to avoid or minimize an impact. It is often bundled with forward collision warning and goes by names such as City Safety automatic braking (Volvo), Low Speed Forward Automatic Braking (Cadillac) and Frontal Collision Warning with City Collision Mitigation (BMW).

SHOULD YOU GET IT? Yes. The fact it is becoming a standard feature soon speaks to its importance.

ADAPTIVE CRUISE CONTROL: This system is less an active safety feature than a way to reduce driver fatigue on the highway. Let's say you set the cruise control at 70 mph. If a you catch up to another vehicle or one gets into your lane, the system will apply the brakes to slow your car down and follow the vehicle ahead at a preset distance. The naming is fairly standard, with the exception of more advanced systems such as Super Cruise (Cadillac), ProPilot Assist (Nissan) and Autopilot (Tesla).

SHOULD YOU GET IT? It depends. These systems require you to trust the car to speed up and slow down on its own. If you're not OK with that or don't use cruise control at all, save your money. And, just as with some drivers, some systems brake more smoothly than others.

BLIND-SPOT MONITORING: This system will scan the rear corners of the vehicle and light up your side mirrors when it detects a vehicle in those zones. It's one of the most common new safety technologies, available on about 73 percent of 2017 models, according to Edmunds data. Some automaker names include Side Blind Zone Alert (Chevrolet), Audi Side Assist (Audi) and Blind Spot Detection (Hyundai).

SHOULD YOU GET IT? Yes, but you must regularly use your turn signals to get the most out of it. Some systems will activate the warning light when a vehicle is in your blind spot, but the warning tone or vibration will only occur when your turn signal is activated.

LANE DEPARTURE WARNING AND LANE KEEPING ASSIST: If your attention wanders and your vehicle starts to drift out of the lane, a lane departure system warns you with a beep, vibration or visual cue on the instrument panel. If the vehicle also is equipped with lane keeping assist, it will go beyond just a warning: It will make a minor steering or braking correction to keep the car in its lane. Common names for these systems are LaneSense (Chrysler), Active Lane Keeping Assist (Mercedes-Benz) and Lane Departure Alert with Steering Assist (Toyota). NHTSA recommends lane departure warning but does not yet recommend lane keeping assist.

SHOULD YOU GET IT? Yes, but to get the most out of it, make sure to get a system with lane keeping assist, not just the warning. If the car's camera can no longer see the painted lanes, or if you veer out to make room for a cyclist, it will trigger an alert. Some may find the beeping annoying and choose to mute the alerts. That's why the lane keeping function, with its noiseless, more subtle physical cues, is more useful.

REAR CROSS-TRAFFIC ALERT: This system is most useful when you're in a parking lot and have to reverse out of a space. Sensors on the rear bumpers detect an approaching vehicle and warn you that it's there. Names include Rear Cross Path Detection (Fiat), Moving Object Detection (Infiniti) and Rear Traffic Alert (Volkswagen).

SHOULD YOU GET IT? Yes, but don't expect it to catch everything. As the name implies, the sensors will spot objects crossing from the sides of the vehicle. If something or someone is directly behind the vehicle, you won't get the alert.

Edmunds has written that most of these safety systems are good to have, but consumers will usually find them on higher trim levels or bundled in optional packages. Edmunds encourages potential buyers to make sure that they rank their list of must-have safety features before making a final purchasing decision.

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All prices and payments include GM rebates. Pictures may not represent actual vehicle. Pricing subject to change per GM incentives. Prices and payments are inclusive of active GM employee discount (unless otherwise stated). All leases are 10,000 miles per year with approved S Tier credit. Disposition Fee may be required at vehicle turn in. Vehicles. Must have lease loyalty and/or closing competitive lease depending on vehicle model. Lacrosse purchase price is gm employee discount, lease loyalty, and trade in rebate. Lacrosse purchase price is plus interest rate. Lacrosse purchase is \$2500 down plus title taxes and fees. Prices and payments are plus tax, title, plate fee w/ acquisition fee up front, refundable security deposit required on certain vehicles - to be determined by lender. Purchase pricing is gm employee discount plus title, taxes and fees. Pricing is subject to select model vehicles- while supplies last. Pricing has included instant value certificates, while supplies last. **\$3,500 trade in is valid on 2003 or newer vehicles w/ under 115k miles in drivable condition, no branded titles, reconditioning determined by appraiser. Certain restrictions may apply, see dealer for complete details. ** Exp date: 1/2/2018.



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