

GM Joins the Trend Led by American Automakers Retirement, Layoffs, Work Relocations Called For by GM Transformation Plan

by Jim Stickford

GM's recent announcement that it would stop manufacturing many of its sedans, including the Buick LaCrosse, the Cadillac CT6, the Chevrolet Impala, the Cadillac XTS and the Chevrolet Cruze and Volt, reflects a trend by Detroit OEMs to concentrate manufacturing efforts on pickup trucks, SUVs and CUVs.

GM's shift away from sedans to more SUVs, CUVs and pickup trucks is following a trend in the automotive industry.

FCA led the way back in July of 2016, when the company announced that it was retooling its Belvidere (Ill.) Assembly plant. The facility was manufacturing the Dodge Dart, and it was announced that the company would cease production of the Dart and the facility would be used to manufacture the Jeep Cherokee.

That was the same year that FCA ceased production of the Chrysler 200 at Sterling Heights Assembly.

In July of 2016 then-CEO Sergio Marchionne said during a conference call with Wall Street analysts after the automaker reported second-quarter earnings that FCA had a plan to wind down production of sedans and primarily produce Jeeps, SUVs and Ram pickup trucks.

"By the time we finish with this, hopefully, all of our production assets in the United States – if you exclude Canada and Mexico from the fold – all those U.S. plants will be producing either Jeeps or Rams," Marchionne said.

There will be no passenger cars that will be produced in the U.S., he said, and therefore, the company's expectation is that concentration will give it the possibility to get very close to the 12.1 percent profit margin that General Motors reported earlier in 2016.

FCA still produces the Chrysler 300, as well as several editions of the Dodge Charger and Dodge Challenger.

In March of 2018, Ford followed suit and announced that it was investing in its Michigan Assembly Plant in Wayne to switch production from the Focus to the Ranger pickup truck by the end of 2018 and the new Bronco in 2020.

"At Ford, we are investing aggressively in building on our strengths today," said Joe Hinrichs, Ford president, The Americas, including trucks, vans, commercial vehicles, performance vehicles and SUVs – while at the same time growing our leadership in electrification, autonomy and mobility services.

"As America's top producer of

automobiles, we are proud to be going even further in our commitment to invest in manufacturing here at home."

Ford also announced that it was ceasing production of the Fiesta, Fusion and Taurus.

When talking to the media, Ford CEO Jim Hackett said that the move was done so that Ford could feed the healthy parts of the auto business, and "deal decisively with the parts that destroy value."

This has left the Mustang as the only sedan Ford will be making in the future.

The plan calls for the company to close Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly, Lordstown Assembly, Oshawa Assembly, Warren Transmission and Baltimore Operations.

GM spokeswoman Kim Carpenter said that GM has provisions in its labor contract that allow affected employees to transfer to openings at other GM locations.

So GM's move away from making sedans makes sense, said Paul Eisenstein, head of The Detroit Bureau, a private automotive news agency.

"GM is moving closer to stopping production of sedans," Eisenstein said. "But that makes rational sense because the company wants to rationalize its production

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What's Left; A Concise Listing Of GM Plants Across the U.S.

GM's recent announcement about plant closings allows for employees to transfer to other plants when possible, said Julie Huston-Rough, director of GM Financial Communications.

She said that GM's plans will use a combination of layoffs and work relocations to achieve the company's desired staffing levels.

"GM will evaluate the overall employment impact over the next several weeks, considering retirements, transfers, etc," Huston-Rough said in a statement issued to the *Detroit Auto Scene*. "Once this work has been completed, we will fulfill any contractual or statutory notice obligations. All we can confirm is the current staffing at each facility."

Here is a list of GM's facilities in the United States.

Assembly Plants:

- Arlington Assembly, Arlington, Texas. It employs about 4,400 people in three shifts and makes the Suburban and Tahoe.
- Bowling Green Assembly in Bowling Green, Ky. There are about 871 people who make the Chevrolet Corvette and the LT4 6.2L V8 engine.
- Fairfax Assembly and Stamping Plant in Kansas City, Kan. The facility employs about 2,260 people and makes the Chevrolet Malibu.
- Flint Assembly. The facility employs about 3,500 people and assembles Heavy-Duty Chevrolet and GMC Sierra Crew and Regular Cab Trucks, Light-Duty Chevrolet Silverado Crew and Regular Cab Trucks.
- Fort Wayne (Ind.) Assembly. It employs about 4,700 people and makes the GMC Sierra LD and HD and the Chevrolet Silverado LD and HD.
- Lansing Delta Township/Lansing Regional Stamping employs about 2,900 people. The assembly side opera-

tions in two shifts and makes the Buick Enclave and the Chevy Traverse. The Stamping part operates in three shifts.

- Lansing Grand River Assembly/Stamping employs about 1,900 people. The assembly side makes the Cadillac ATS, the CTS and the Chevy Camaro. Assembly works two shifts and stamping works three shifts.
- Orion Assembly employs about 1,200 people and makes the Chevy Bolt, the Chevy Sonic and Cruise AV test vehicles.
- Spring Hill Manufacturing in Spring Hill, Tenn., employs about 3,100 people and makes the GMC Acadia, as well as small block 6.2L V8 engines and the Ecotec 1.5L turbo engine. It also operates a stamping operation that makes parts for other GM plants.
- Wentzville Assembly is located in Wentzville, Mo., and employs about 4,000 people

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



The CT6 is one of the vehicles that GM is discontinuing as part of a company-wide reorganization plan.



Low sales for the Cruze has resulted in GM dropping it from its lineup.

Ammann Named to Head GM's Cruise Automation Group

Just days after GM unveiled plans to transform the company, the next step was taken toward commercializing autonomous vehicle technology as GM President Dan Ammann was appointed CEO of Cruise Automation.

GM purchased Cruise Automation in March of 2016.

At the time of the acquisition, GM officials said that Cruise would operate as an independent unit within GM's recently formed Autonomous Vehicle Development Team led by Doug Parks, GM vice president of autonomous technology and vehicle execution, and would continue to be based in San Francisco.

Founded in 2013, Cruise Automation has moved quickly to develop and test auto-

nous vehicle technology in San Francisco's city environment.

GM spokesman Pat Morrissey said that Kyle Vogt, Cruise co-founder, will partner with Ammann to set strategic direction for the company and will lead technology development as Cruise president and chief technology officer. The appointments are effective Jan. 1, 2019.

Under Vogt's leadership, Cruise has emerged as an industry leader in autonomous vehicle technology, growing from 40 employees to more than 1,000 at its San Francisco headquarters and recently announced an additional expansion of 100-200 employees in Seattle.

With recent investments by SoftBank and Honda, Cruise's val-

uation has rapidly grown to \$14.6 billion, Morrissey said.

"These appointments further demonstrate our commitment to transforming mobility through the safe deployment of self-driving technology and move us closer to our vision for a future with zero crashes, zero emissions and zero congestion," said GM Chairman and CEO Mary Barra.

"As we move toward commercial deployment, adding Dan to the strong team led by Kyle is the next step."

Morrissey said that as GM president, Ammann spearheaded the 2016 Cruise acquisition and, among his other global responsibilities, oversaw GM's relationship with Cruise.

He is deeply familiar with

Cruise's business and technology and its team, Morrissey said.

"I'm excited to dedicate 100 percent of my time and energy to helping Kyle and the entire team

realize our mission of deploying this technology at scale," said Ammann.

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Kan, Vogt and Ammann will be running GM's Cruise operations.

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Antique Appraisal At Miller Library

Join Dan and Judy Landino of D & J Auction and Appraisal Services at the Miller Library for an overview of the collectibles and antiques market, with a brief verbal appraisal of audience members' treasure on Dec. 6 at 6 p.m.

D & J Auction and Appraisal Services is a local company that has been dealing in the procurement, restoration, and sale of valuables for over 20 years. While not all attendees will get appraisals, the format allows all who attend to learn about the items that others have brought.

What's Left: Concise Listing of GM Plants Across the U.S.

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- in three shifts making the Chevy Express and GMC Savana vans as well as the Chevrolet Colorado and the GMC Canyon.
- Propulsion:**
- Bay City Powertrain employs about 380 people and produces engine and transmission components.
 - Bedford Casting Operations in Bedford, Ind., employs about 800 people and is one of the leading aluminum die casting facilities in the world and produces transmission casings, converter housings, heads, and small gas engine blocks that are used in Chevrolet, Buick, GMC and Cadillac vehicles.
 - Defiance Casting Operations in Defiance, Ohio, employs about 650 people and produces cylinder block and cylinder head castings for Inline 4, V6 and V8 engines.
 - DMAX Ltd., in Moraine, Ohio, employs about 800 people and is a joint venture, 60 percent owned by GM, 40 percent owned by Isuzu Diesel Services of America, Inc. The redesigned Duramax 6.6L V8 turbo-diesel engines offered on the 2017 GMC Sierra and

- Chevrolet Silverado HD are made there.
- Flint Engine Operations employs about 800 people and produces 1.4L engines.
 - Romulus Powertrain employs about 1,400 people and produces V6 engines and 10-speed transmissions used in several GM cars, trucks and crossovers.
 - Saginaw Metal Casting Operations in Saginaw employs about 500 people and uses four technically advanced aluminum casting processes: green sand, lost foam, precision sand to make parts for General Motors vehicles.
 - Toledo transmission in Toledo, Ohio, employs about 1,700 people and manufacture and assemble GM's six-speed and eight-speed rear-

- wheel-drive and six-speed front-wheel-drive transmissions.
- Tonawanda Engine Plant in Buffalo, N.Y., employs about 1,600 people and makes the Ecotec3 family of engines.
- Tool and Die:**
- Flint Tool & Die employs about 450 people and does Die and pattern construction: Recent projects in clude engineering and development of dies for the Chevrolet Cruze and Volt and Cadillac CTS coupe.
- Metal Centers:**
- Marion Metal Center in Marion, Ind., employs about 1,600 people and produces blanks, stampings and sheet metal assembly

- for cars, vans, trucks and SUVs.
- Parma Metal Center in Parma, Ohio, processes more than 1,000 tons of steel per day and employs about 1,350 people.
 - Pontiac Metal Center in Pontiac, employs about 500 people and makes parts for a variety of vehicles, including the Sonic, the Traverse, the Silverado and the Acadia.
- Battery Assembly:**
- Brownstown Battery employs about 120 people and assembles lithiumion batteries for General Motors' Chevrolet Volt, Malibu Hybrid, Silverado eAssist, GMC Sierra eAssist, Buick LaCrosse Hybrid, and Cadillac CT6 Plug-In vehicles.

Retirement, Layoffs, Work Relocations

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

process and sedans are not currently a favorite body style with the public right now.

"What is popular is the higher seating that comes with SUVs and pickup trucks. Higher seating is especially popular with women drivers."

Eisenstein said that he believes GM won't be the last OEM to reduce the number of sedans in a company's portfolio. He noted that there are currently rumors that Toyota will eliminate some sedans that it will offer to the public.

"I do see this trend of reducing sedan output spreading to other OEMs," Eisenstein said. "It's just rational. Why build vehicles that nobody wants to buy? Such a move away from sedans makes sense in this current marketplace."

Local Supplier Goes International With Sale of Cluster Technology

Visteon Corporation of Van Buren Township, a cockpit electronics supplier, is supplying its latest infotainment system and hybrid instrument cluster technology on the new Mahindra Marazzo, launched in September 2018.

"The Marazzo promises a stylish, spacious and feature-rich driving experience, with the shark design-inspired family vehicle set to become one of Mahindra's flagship models on the Indian market," said Visteon spokesman Jim Fisher.

The futuristic digital cockpit design incorporates several cutting-edge technology features and is designed to increase the driver's safety and environmental awareness.

Visteon's infotainment system features include a 7-inch capacitive touchscreen with haptics, CarPlay, Android Auto, voice-activated controls, native navigation, EcoSense to rank driving patterns, audio with emergency calling, Bluetooth and a host of other features to provide a best-in-class user experience.

The instrument cluster – also supplied by Visteon – is designed on a scalable platform to cater to multiple model variants. The high-end variant has a 4.2-inch TFT-based display and incorporates turn-by-turn navigation as well as personal and service reminders as some of the key intuitive features available.

The Marazzo's cockpit elec-

tronics technologies are fully designed, developed and manufactured in India. The infotainment and instrument cluster were designed by Visteon's technical centers in Chennai and Pune.

Ammann Picked As Cruise's New Lead Executive

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"Dan's been my partner since General Motors' initial investment in Cruise and I am thrilled he has agreed to join us full-time," said Vogt. "Dan's thorough understanding of our mission and his operational expertise make him the perfect fit to lead Cruise into commercial deployment."

Dan Kan will act as Cruise Automation's chief operating officer.

With Ammann's appointment, GM's global regions and GM Financial will now report directly to Mary Barra, Morrissey said.

GM is eliminating the position of president. Barra will now assume the responsibilities that went with the position.

Since becoming part of GM, in the year 2016 Cruise has been working exclusively on developing software for making GM's Chevy Bolt electric vehicle fully autonomous.

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MDOT Aims to Have I-696 Work Done by Year's End

by Jim Stickford

Construction along I-696 will continue even if it snows.

MDOT spokeswoman Diane Cross said that the goal is to have the projected completed by the end of 2018.

"Weather is the unknown factor," Cross said. "Right now our crews are using winter construction equipment such as heaters to continue work in the cold weather."

Construction was halted during September for about three weeks, putting the project behind schedule.

The work started in April and was scheduled to be complete by some time in November. Construction has closed down all westbound traffic on I-696 from I-94 to I-75. Workers first tore up and replaced pavement on the westbound lanes.

Once that work was completed they began work on the eastbound lanes.

During this phase of construc-

tion, eastbound traffic is being diverted to the westbound lanes and as a result the number of entrance and exit points to eastbound I-696 has been limited.

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) issued a progress bulletin in November.

It stated that work can and will continue even with the arrival of snow, according to the MDOT bulletin.

Here's how:

- For now and the foreseeable future, temperatures will still allow concrete to safely be placed within our standard specifications.
- Concrete temperatures are closely monitored and remain well above freezing during the curing process.
- Protective measures are being taken to guard against freezing: boilers are in place at our concrete plants, ground heaters are on site, and ground cover blankets are in use.

The Nov. 16 bulletin further



MDOT crews are using cold weather equipment to continue repair work on I-696 in Macomb County.

stated that a significant increase in effort to work in these conditions though both MDOT and the Contractor are committed to doing everything within our control

to get both EB and WB I-696 and all ramps open this year.

"This is frustrating for everyone," Cross said. "I live in the area and use I-696 as well. It's

frustrating for MDOT and it's frustrating for the drivers who use I-696. We all drive the same roads and it's frustrating for all of us."

Macomb's Sewer Maintenance Class

Macomb County Michigan State University Extension (MSUE), in partnership with the Macomb County Health Department, is holding a free septic system use and maintenance workshop in Ray Township.

The seminar will be held Wednesday, Dec. 12 from 6:15 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Ray Township office, 64255 Wolcott, Ray Township.

Topics covered during the seminar include how a septic system functions, septic system

maintenance, how to detect septic system failure, water conservation and well construction and maintenance. Handouts, including the Home*A*Syst (Home Assessment System) book, will be available.

A faulty septic system can threaten a family's health as well as harm pets and wildlife, contaminate groundwater and lower property values.

To register, to events.anr.msu.edu/septic-tank. Call 586 469-6440 for more information.



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Jeep Revives the Gladiator Pickup Truck

FCA's Jeep brand came out fighting at the recent Los Angeles Auto Show with the introduction of the Gladiator pickup truck.

"Unquestionably a truck and instantly recognizable as a Jeep, the all-new 2020 Gladiator is the ultimate vehicle for any outdoor adventure," said Tim Kuniskis, head of Jeep Brand – North America.

"Gladiator combines rugged utility, versatility and functionality resulting in the most capable midsize truck ever."

The Gladiator, said Kuniskis, also has advanced fuel-efficient powertrains, superior on- and off-road dynamics and a host of innovative safety and advanced technology features.

Its off-road capability comes courtesy of the Command-Trac and Rock-Trac 4x4 systems, third-generation Dana 44 axles, Tru-Lock electric front- and rear-axle lockers, Trac-Lok limited-slip differential, segment-exclusive sway-bar disconnect and 33-inch off-road tires.

The 2020 Jeep Gladiator is available in these different trim configurations: Sport, Sport S, Overland and Rubicon. Built in Toledo, Ohio, the all-new 2020 Jeep Gladiator arrives in the second quarter of 2019.

And the Gladiator's look honors the Jeep heritage, said FCA spokesman Todd Goyer, adding that it has a design aesthetic that is immediately recognizable with traditional Jeep design cues.

The Jeep design team kept the seven-slot grille seen on Wrangler, but widened the grille slots for additional air intake to assist with the increased towing capacity, Goyer said. The top of the keystone-shaped grille is swept back to enhance aerodynamics.

Gladiator Overland and Rubicon models offer available LED headlamps and fog lamps that



Kuniskis introduced the Jeep Gladiator at the L.A. Auto Show.



The Gladiator's interior offers the latest in automotive technology.

project white lighting. Gladiator models equipped with LEDs feature daytime running lights, which form a halo around the outside perimeter of the headlights. Forward turn signals are positioned on the front of the trapezoidal wheel flares.

The Gladiator offers the 3.6-liter Pentastar V6 engine at launch with a 3.0-liter EcoDiesel V6 engine being offered in 2020.

Gladiator's eight-speed automatic transmission boasts a responsive driving experience, Goyer said.

Two advanced 4x4 systems are offered on the 2020 Gladiator. The Command-Trac 4x4 system, standard on Sport and Overland, features a two-speed transfer case with a 2.72:1 low-range gear ratio, and heavy-duty third-generation Dana 44 front.

Ford Plans Restructuring To Meet Customer Needs

Ford is reminding the public how the company will transform itself for the future on the same day that GM officials announced a restructuring process that will reduce the number of both salaried and hourly employees as well as close several plants.

A Nov. 26 Ford statement said that the Dearborn automaker "has been working intensively and taking action to transform our business over the past 18 months."

"As we redesign and restructure our global business, we will build on our areas of strength; smartly and strategically address underperforming products and regions; and invest in the future by designing smart vehicles for a smart world."

Brad Carroll, Ford global news manager, said that the company's key actions for the future will include an updated footprint.

Ford announced in July that restructuring activities could have potential EBIT charges of \$11 billion, with cash-related effects of \$7 billion, over the next five years. These actions will come largely outside of North America.

And transforming product development is also a major goal of Ford, Carroll said. The company announced nine months ago that it is shifting to five flexible architectures for its vehicles – driving a 20 percent savings in time from sketch to showroom and yielding significant efficiencies.

As part of this, Ford has also identified ways to manage up to 70 percent of each vehicle's value through increased component sharing, Carroll said.

The company also formed a new Enterprise Product Line Management group, which establishes 10 cross-functional teams that will manage distinct product lines as end-to-end businesses and leverage Ford's human-centered design, advanced product marketing and user experience teams to create breakthrough products and customer experiences.

A major part of Ford's strategy for the future is shifting its vehicle portfolio.

"We've already taken actions to shift our vehicle portfolio to better meet our customers' needs going forward and strengthen our business, improving returns," Carroll said.

"This includes moving approximately 90 percent of our North American vehicle lineup volume to SUVs, pickup trucks and commercial vehicles between 2018 and by the end of 2020. The company is phasing out slow-selling traditional sedans to free up capital for new entries in growing segments."

Ford's plans for the future also call for strong investments in Autonomous and Electrified Vehicles, Carroll said. Ford's fitness actions are freeing up capital to invest in emerging businesses. Ford expects to invest \$4 billion in its AV efforts through 2023, including its \$1 billion investment in Argo AI.

In addition, Ford is investing \$11 billion in electrification from 2015 to 2022 to deliver a total of 40 vehicles globally.

The company remains on track to deliver a full battery electric performance SUV that offers at least a 300-mile range in 2020.

Capacity utilization is also a major component of the company's future, Carroll said.

Ford has the best manufacturing capacity utilization in North America, said Carroll, based on the aggressive restructuring the company completed a decade ago, including its use of industry-leading three-crew operating patterns and Ford's continued discipline around balancing capacity with consumer demand.

Doing all this means organizational redesign, Carroll said.

"We are in the early stages of reorganizing our global salaried workforce to support the company's strategic objectives, create a more dynamic and empowering work environment and become more fit as a business," Carroll said.

"The reorganization will result in headcount reduction over time, and this will vary based on team and location."

Finally, he said, Ford is entering into new strategic alliances.

"We are in talks with both Volkswagen and Mahindra about potential collaborations across a number of areas of our business," Carroll said.

"We are encouraged by both sets of talks and continue working to ensure these alliances help us better serve customers globally."

Student Summit at MCC

More than 500 students attended the fourth annual Macomb Diversity Summit at the Macomb Intermediate School District on Nov. 27.

The summit provides an opportunity for middle and high school students from around the county to dialogue about race relations and cultural matters that are relevant today, said Macomb County spokeswoman Pamela Lavers.

The forum was also designed to help student leaders develop action plans regarding ways they can work to create positive environments for everyone in their schools, communities and lives, Lavers said.

"Macomb County schools support an environment where diversity is celebrated. We are pleased to partner with the Macomb County Executive's Office, OneMacomb, McLaren Hospital and Macomb Community College by hosting this event," said Mike DeVault, Macomb Intermediate School District superintendent.

The event was the product of hard work by both Macomb public schools and MCC.

"The summit gives voice to students so they can share their perspective on challenges as well as bright spots in a meaning-

ful forum," said Dr. James O. Sawyer IV, president, Macomb Community College.

"It is important to engage youth, foster their community involvement and cultivate their leadership abilities."

Several students from Carter Middle School in Warren Consolidated said that attending the event gave them something to think about.

"This experience helped us understand how being different is a good thing and how to accept each other. It taught us that we should appreciate diversity and that being mindful of others helps us learn more about the world. Even though we're different we're united through our differences," said students Sophia Nguyen, Jack Stevenson, Orjada Tafa, Twyla Parker, Ysabele Mana in a written statement to the media.

"The students tackled these important conversations with courage, optimism and genuine respect for one another," said Macomb County Executive Mark A. Hackel. "The 2018 Macomb Diversity Summit was extremely successful. The students felt valued and many expressed appreciation for the acknowledgement of their voices."

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FCA Scores Big at Los Angeles Auto Show

FCA had a good week at the recent Los Angeles Auto Show, as *Motor Trend* named the 2019 Jeep Wrangler the 2019 SUV of the Year, the 2019 Ram 1500 as the Truck of the Year and honored the late Sergio Marchionne as the 2019 Person of the Year for auto industry.

Motor Trend's "Of the Year" awards recognize the best vehicles representing exceptional value, superiority in their classes and impact on the automotive scene, said FCA spokesman Nick Cappa.

"The Jeep Wrangler and Ram 1500 are significant products at FCA," said FCA's CEO Mike Manley. "Concurrently winning *Motor Trend's* SUV of the Year and Truck of the Year titles is a proud accomplishment, and a testament to the capability and determination of our employees.

"These awards help to acknowledge our team's tireless efforts to ensure the new Wrangler and the new Ram 1500 stand out in their competitive segments.

"On behalf of all FCA employees, we also deeply appreciate *Motor Trend's* recognition of Sergio Marchionne as Person of the Year. His legacy in the industry, and his lasting impact on FCA will be remembered forever."

Motor Trend's "Of The Year" program is open to any new or substantially upgraded 2019 model-year vehicles, said Ed Loh, *Motor Trend* editor-in-chief.

Instead of being compared against one another, contending vehicles are first put through *Motor Trend's* full battery of performance tests to evaluate virtually every aspect of each vehicle. All competitors are then evaluated on three separate courses at a professional automotive test center before finalists are selected.

"For 2019, the Ram 1500 and Jeep Wrangler blew away our

Motor Trend editors and judges by not only delivering class-leading capability for work and play, but truly impressive levels of refinement, technology, style and comfort," said Loh. "Congratulations to FCA for delivering two real winners.

"Sergio was a special leader who salvaged troubled Chrysler and Fiat, saving thousands of jobs across the globe. He was a man who did not do something unless he was convinced it would be successful. Sergio Marchionne got the work done and he left an indelible mark on the automotive industry."

After weeks of testing conclude, the judges determine which vehicles will be given "Of the Year" titles, Loh said. The winners are not chosen from a direct comparison against other finalists, but instead a result of how each contender measured against the award's six criteria: design advancement, engineering excellence, efficiency, safety, value and performance of intended function.

Editors liked the 2019 Ram 1500, writing that the "fifth-generation Ram 1500 is the latest in a long line of evolutionary leaps for Fiat Chrysler Automobiles' bread-and-butter truck. The newest version, more than any other, seems poised to meet the needs of the 21st century truck buyer, with more variety, capability, comfort, convenience, and value than ever before."

Editors also praised the 1500 for its "stylish functionality" that never went over the top.

They also liked the truck's new high-strength steel platform, 4.0 inches longer and about 17 percent lighter than the old chassis. they noted that aerodynamic sheetmetal is largely built from steel but with the strategic use of lighter metals for a total weight

decrease in the neighborhood of 200 pounds.

Editors praised the 2019 Wrangler for honoring the Jeep heritage while its re-engineering makes it a vehicle for the future.

"The Wrangler is a thoughtful, thorough rework of an American original," *Motor Trend's* international bureau chief Angus MacKenzie said. "It's laser-focused on improving the performance of its intended function, right down to the last nut and bolt."

Editors noted that the Wrangler advances design by mastering some details better than other "sensible" crossovers.

"Soft-touch and high-quality materials equal those of luxury competitors," editors wrote. "As with many Fiat Chrysler Automobiles products, audio volume and channel-change controls are located conveniently on the back side of the steering wheel.



2019 Ram 1500

"Once you drive a car with this intuitive setup, you'll wonder why more automakers don't adopt it. The same is true of the rear-seat headrests, which conveniently fold down when not in use for better rearward visibility."

Finally, editors praised the

Wrangler for doing what it was designed to do very well instead of trying to be all things.

The stated that the "Wrangler never pretends to be a sports car. Instead, the Jeep provides a deliberate pace, encouraging you to appreciate your surroundings."

AAM Appoints New Member to its Board

American Axle & Manufacturing of Detroit named Sandra (Sandy) Pierce and Herbert K. Parker to its Board of Directors in November.

Pierce is the Sr. Executive Vice President, Private Client Group and Regional Banking Director and Chairman of Michigan for Huntington National Bank , said AAM spokeswoman Andrea Knapp.

"Sandy has vast financial knowledge and an outstanding commitment to Detroit and to Michigan," said David C. Dauch, Chairman and CEO, AAM. "We look forward to Sandy's insight and experience and welcome her to the AAM family."

Pierce joined Huntington in 2016 after the FirstMerit merger and leads the following corpo-

rate-wide revenue segments: Huntington Private Bank, Huntington Insurance Agency, Huntington Auto Finance and RV/Marine. Pierce also has management responsibility for Huntington's Community Development initiatives and Huntington's Regional Presidents across its eight-state footprint. Pierce is Chair of Huntington Bank Michigan.

Prior to joining FirstMerit, Pierce was Midwest Regional Executive, President and CEO for Charter One Bank, Michigan and a Regional Executive for JPMorgan Chase. Pierce began her career at NBD Bank.

Parker is the former Executive Vice President of Operational Excellence, Harman International.

"Herbert brings a wealth of fi-

nancial, operational, strategic and international experience to the AAM board," said Dauch. "We welcome Herbert to AAM and look forward to working with him as we continue to expand into new markets and vehicle segments."

Parker was the Executive Vice President of Operational Excellence, Harman International from 2015 to March of 2017 when he retired. In this position he was responsible for Mergers & Acquisitions, Information Technology and Internal Audit. He also served as Harman's Chief Financial Officer from 2008 to 2014.

Prior to joining Harman, Parker served in various senior financial positions with global power and technology company ABB Group.

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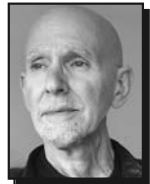
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Automaker Alliances Don't Often Work Out

by YURI KAGEYAMA
AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) – The arrest of Nissan's former chief executive Carlos Ghosn has raised doubts over the future of the alliance among automakers Nissan, Renault and Mitsubishi Motors that he helped to forge. Such partnerships wax and wane over time, but they've grown in importance as companies develop electric vehicles, net connectivity and artificial intelligence for autos.

Ghosn was arrested Nov. 19 in Tokyo on suspicion of under-reporting his income and other financial misconduct. The boards of Nissan Motor Co. and Mitsubishi Motor Corp. voted unanimously to oust him as chairman, while Renault SA of France has kept him while seeking more information about his case.

With Ghosn gone, speculation is growing Nissan may review its alliance with Renault. Renault owns 43 percent of Nissan, while Nissan owns 15 percent of Renault, with the French government also holding a 15 percent stake.

Renault rescued Nissan from the brink of bankruptcy in 1999, but the Japanese automaker is now more profitable than its French partner.

This is not the first time East-West auto alliances in Japan have run afoul, underlining the challenges of such collaborations. Here's a look at some other alliances and why they folded:

U.S. automaker Ford Motor Co. helped engineer a turnaround at Japan's Mazda Motor Corp., forming an alliance in 1979 and taking a 25 percent stake. That was raised in 1996 to 33.4 percent, considered a controlling share in Japan.

Ford sent executives and shared technology and auto

parts to help cut costs at struggling Mazda. But the U.S. automaker ran into problems of its own and became hungry for cash, Mazda began buying back stakes, spending 17.8 billion yen (about \$150 million at today's exchange rate) to buy back 6.8 percent of its own shares in 2008. The U.S. automaker, based in Dearborn, Michigan, gave up its top stakeholder position in Mazda in 2010 and now owns no stake in Mazda.

Ford executives sent to Mazda over three decades included Henry Wallace, the first foreigner to head a major Japanese company, and Mark Fields, who later became CEO of Ford. Japanese managers retook the helm in 2003, as Mazda insiders quietly rejoined.

Hiroshima-based Mazda, which makes the Miata roadster, has more recently entered a partnership with Japan's top automaker Toyota Motor Corp., investing in a plant that makes vehicles for both brands in the U.S. and sharing technology.

The 50-50 joint-venture plant in Fremont, California, between Toyota Motor Corp. and U.S. automaker General Motors Co. started rolling out cars in 1984 and was heralded as a pioneer in international collaboration.

Known as NUMMI, or New United Motor Manufacturing, Inc., the plant inspired feel-good stories about how American

workers were learning and taking pride in Toyota's famed super-efficient production methods.

Akio Toyoda, the grandson of Toyota's founder who now heads Toyota, worked at NUMMI from 1998 to 2000, as have other top Toyota executives, an experience meant to ready them for a globalizing industry and increasingly diverse workforce.

But the NUMMI plant, which had produced the Pontiac Vibe and Chevrolet Nova, closed in 2010 after General Motors declared bankruptcy and Toyota pulled out, moving production to other plants in North America.

German-U.S. automaker Daimler Chrysler bought a 37 percent stake in Tokyo-based Mitsubishi Motors Corp. in 2000, but the alliance felt rocky from the start. Mitsubishi Motors was embroiled in a years' long scandal over its systematic cover-up of auto defects.

Rolf Eckrodt, sent in by Daimler Chrysler, stepped down as chief at Mitsubishi in 2004.

The Mitsubishi group gradually recovered the stake in Mitsubishi and Ghosn engineered a 34 percent-stake purchase by Nissan in 2016 amid another scandal.

Daimler Chrysler never managed to fix the debt and lagging sales at Mitsubishi Motors, which makes the Pajero sport-utility vehicle and the i-MiEV electric car.

Chinese Vehicles Not the Most Private

SHANGHAI (AP) – Global automakers are feeding real-time location information and dozens of other data points from electric vehicles to Chinese government monitoring centers, potentially adding to China's rich kit of surveillance tools as President Xi Jinping steps up the use of technology to track Chinese citizens. Generally, it happens without car owners' knowledge, The Associated Press found.

More than 200 automakers selling electric vehicles in China – including Tesla, Volkswagen, BMW, Daimler, Ford, General Motors, Nissan, Mitsubishi and U.S.-listed start-up NIO – send at least 61 data points to government-backed monitoring platforms, under rules published in 2016.

Automakers say they are merely complying with local laws, which apply only to alternative energy vehicles. Chinese officials say the data is used for analytics to improve public safety, facilitate industrial development and infrastructure planning, and to prevent fraud in subsidy programs.

But critics say the information collected exceeds those goals and could be used to undermine foreign carmakers' competitive position, or for surveillance. Under Xi's leadership, China has unleashed a war on dissent, marshalling big data and artificial intelligence to create a more perfect kind of policing that can quickly neutralize perceived threats to the stability of the ruling Communist Party.

There is also concern about the precedent these rules set for sharing data from next-generation connected cars, which may soon transmit even more personal information.

"You're learning a lot about people's day-to-day activities and that becomes part of what I call ubiquitous surveillance," said Michael Chertoff, who was secretary of the Department of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush and wrote a book called "Exploding Data." "Companies have to ask themselves, 'Is this really something we want to do in terms of our corporate values, even if it means otherwise forgoing that market?'"

At the Shanghai Electric Vehi-

cle Public Data Collecting, Monitoring and Research Center, a wall-sized screen glows with dots. Each represents one of more than 222,000 vehicles connected to the system, coursing along Shanghai's roads to create a massive real-time map that could reveal where people live, shop, work, and worship.

Data also flows to a national monitoring center run by the Beijing Institute of Technology, which pulls information from more than 1.1 million new energy vehicles. Those numbers are about to get much bigger, as Beijing pushes electric vehicle development as part of its "Made in China 2025" industrial development plan.

Ding Xiaohua, the deputy director of the Shanghai center, said monitoring is not designed to facilitate state surveillance, though data can be shared with police, prosecutors or courts, if a formal request is made.

The center is registered as a non-profit but is tightly aligned with and funded by the government.

There is a privacy firewall built into the system. The data center has each car's unique vehicle identification number, but to link that with the owner's personal details, it must go through the automaker – a step it has taken in the past. Chinese law enforcement can also link the vehicle identification number with the owner's personal information.

"To speak bluntly, the government doesn't need to surveil through a platform like ours," Ding said.

Many vehicles in the U.S., Europe and Japan transmit position information back to automakers, who feed it to car-tracking apps, maps that pinpoint nearby amenities and emergency services providers. But the data stops there. Government or law enforcement agencies would generally only be able to access vehicle data in the context of a specific criminal investigation and in the U.S. would typically need a court order, lawyers said.

Automakers initially resisted sharing information with the Shanghai monitoring center; then the government made transmitting data a prerequisite for getting incentives.

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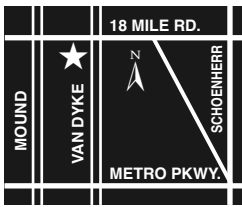
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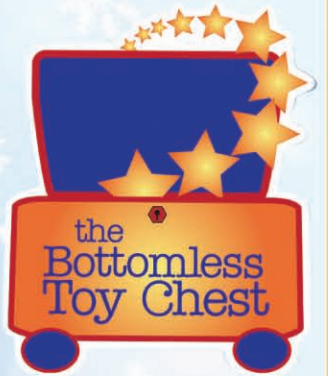
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