

Romulus, Lansing GM Sites Get \$56M Upgrade

General Motors is making moves to improve its relationship with the state of Michigan, as well as the automaker's employees.

The company is investing \$36 million at its Lansing Delta Township (LDT) assembly plant for future crossover production, as well as \$20 million in GM's Romulus Powertrain facility.

GM currently builds the Chevrolet Traverse and Buick Enclave crossovers at LDT and its new V6 engine and new 10-speed automatic transmission at Romulus Powertrain. The announcement was made Feb. 19.

GM spokesman Dan Flores said the new investment in Romulus will be used to purchase additional machining equipment that will enable the transmission capacity expansion.

For competitive reasons, GM is not disclosing specifics or timing related to either the Lansing or Romulus plants' future products at this time, Flores said.

"Romulus has a long-standing reputation of quality, productivity and performance and we are proud of the hard work and commitment displayed by the entire Romulus team," said GM Chairman and CEO Mary Barra during a visit to the plant to meet with employees and community leaders.

"GM's investment in Romulus will enable the plant to continue playing an important role in our core business going forward."

Since 2009, GM has invested more than \$880 million in the Romulus plant. The plant currently employs about 1,350 people.

"We are also proud of the hard work and commitment of the entire Lansing team. The Chevrolet Traverse and Buick Enclave are important products in our growing crossover portfolio," Barra said as she also visited the Lansing plant and met with employ-

ees and Lansing community leaders. "This investment will allow us to prepare the plant for future crossover production."

Also at the Feb. 18 announcement in Lansing was Alicia Boler

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Barra, right, talks with GM employees Angela Jarrett, left, and Kayla Owens in Romulus.

MCC Takes a Trip Back to The 1970s

From the Watergate scandal, Fall of Saigon, and economic crisis through disco music and platform shoes, America saw significant shifts in culture, society and politics during the 1970s.

The Lorenzo Cultural Center, located on Macomb Community College's Center Campus, examines the decade with its new program series, The 70s: Heavy, Hip and Happenin', Feb. 27 through May 4, said Sean Patrick, manager of media relations at MCC.

"Our goal at the Lorenzo Cultural Center is to bring to the community programs that engage, educate and entertain," said William Wood, cultural affairs director, Macomb Community College. "Through a combination of exhibits and presentations, The 70s: Heavy, Hip and Happenin' will immerse attendees in the era, giving them the opportunity to experience and understand the decade firsthand."

Nearly 30 presentations, films and performances are complemented by the exhibits in the cultural center's 8,500-square-foot Discovery Hall. Topics range from the end of the Vietnam War to the Detroit music scene, Patrick said. Call 586-445-7348 for more information.



Testing tools were created to design noise suppression for Explorer.

Ford Goes All Out to Give New Explorer Quiet Ride

Call it one for the books.

The new Ford Explorer, said Ford SUV Marketing Manager Craig Patterson, is designed to provide its quietest interior ever, thanks to a first-for-Ford breakthrough that helps keep noise out and delivers a more comfortable ride for passengers – "and is so quiet a librarian could love it."

"We've spent a lot of time learning about what our Explorer customers want and love in their SUV, and near the top of the list is a comfortable vehicle they can enjoy with their loved ones," said Patterson. "Whether it's taking the family up north for the weekend or taking a date to the movies on Saturday night, a quieter interior allows them to better connect with those who are along for the journey."

Explorer passengers, Patterson said, will enjoy that sense of peace and relaxation courtesy of three sound-reduction features –

a first-for-Ford dual-wall dashboard, acoustic glass and Active Noise Control, available only on Limited Hybrid – designed to combat engine, road and wind noise in the cabin.

Explorer's new dual-wall dashboard is designed to ensure passengers enjoy a cabin free from engine noise caused by vibrations that can manifest in a humming sensation, said Patterson. Separating the engine compartment from the passenger cabin, he said, are two walls – one of which is made of sheet-molded composite material – with an air gap in between.

The dual-wall dashboard, which significantly reduces the traveling sound that comes with a running engine, mimics a semi-anechoic chamber similar to those used in noise, vibration and harshness testing at Ford's

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GM Uses New EV Tech for Prototype Boat

by Jim Stickford

It's an idea that just might float – an all-electric pontoon boat.

Dan Nicholson, GM vice president, Global Electrification, showed off a prototype at the recent Miami Boat Show. The same boat was displayed at the Detroit Boat Show, which ended on Feb. 24.

Nicholson gave a speech in Miami talking about the EV pontoon boat in which he said that GM's vision of zero crashes, zero emissions and zero congestion in the future extends to beyond roads.

"We brought with us some examples of the most tried and true marine engines in the business," Nicholson said. "For more than 60 years, GM Marine has been supplying some of the most respected names in the marine industry with engines for their stern-drive and in-board watercrafts."



This EV pontoon boat was on display at the recent Detroit Boat Show.

He said GM's success in the marine industry comes, in part, from leveraging the company's engineering expertise and manufacturing infrastructure. And that's something to build on, he said.

"We decided that it's time to look at blending our proven ma-

rine product capability with our other strengths and taking it all to the next level with something that fits precisely within the General Motors vision," Nicholson said.

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Ram 1500 Tops Edmunds Editors' Truck List

The 2019 Ram 1500 has been presented the Edmunds Editors' Choice Award for trucks.

"One of the best vehicles we've driven in a long time, the new Ram 1500 is a clever mix of old-school brawn, cutting-edge technology and thoughtful engineering," said Alistair Weaver, Editor-in-chief at Edmunds.

"It drives well, tows well, and inside it feels more upmarket than even some luxury cars. It's a standout vehicle in all aspects and easily grabbed top honors for trucks in 2019."

Edmunds editors test more than 300 vehicles a year and rate



The 2019 Ram 1500 proved to be a winner with Edmunds editors.

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Library to Host Weather Course

On Thursday, March 14, at 6 p.m., the Warren Civic Center Library will host Skywarn, a National Weather Service (NWS) training class. Skywarn is a severe weather spotting program with trained volunteers nationwide. Spotter information helps NWS provide better forecasts and warnings by conveying significant or severe weather reports such as thunderstorms, hail and tornadoes.

The training includes safety information and lasts about 1.5 hours. It is free and open to the public, said Warren librarian Andrea Mucha.

The program will be held in the Atrium Conference Room at the Warren Civic Center. Registration required; call 586-751-0770 to register or online at www.warrenlibrary.net.

Detroit Autos Prove a Hit With Classic Car Collectors

In the classic vehicle world, 2018 will be remembered as the year that younger car lovers took their share of the wheel from older generations.

That's according to a new book of data from Hagerty, an insurance company that specializes in classic automobiles. Its Web site is home to the world's largest community of classic vehicle enthusiasts, said Hagerty spokesman Jonathan Klinger.

For the first time ever, Gen Xers and millennials are seeking vehicle values via Hagerty's Valuation Tools and classic vehicle insurance quotes more often than baby boomers and pre-boomers by a roughly 53-47 percent margin, said Klinger.

Given current trends, millennials, who comprise the nation's largest generation, will become the hobby's single largest group within five years, according to the Hagerty study.

"This shift was inevitable given the combined size of these generations," said McKeel Hagerty, CEO of Hagerty. "We say, 'welcome to the club.' It's great to see that younger generations are just as crazy about cars as their parents and grandparents."

Overall, requests for values and quotes from all generations are up 17 percent in 2018 over last year, indicating a healthy market and continuing interest in cars and driving across generations, said John Wiley, an analyst with Hagerty.

Earlier last year, a Hagerty survey indicated 78 percent of Gen Xers and 81 percent of millennials like, love or are passionate about driving, compared to 79 percent of baby boomers.

The most popular vehicle among boomers, Gen Xers and millennials is the 1965-1966 Ford Mustang, Wiley said. Mustangs, Camaros and Corvettes historically transcend generations, according to Wiley, as do cars built in the late 1960s.

"Everyone loves late '60s cars," said Wiley. "They just have that allure."

But there are distinct generational differences as well. The Ford Model A, for instance, is the most popular car among pre-boomers (born before 1946) but falls to 38th place among millennials, Wiley said. Meanwhile, trucks and SUVs are proving to have strong appeal to younger buyers.

The 1973-87 C/K Series Chevrolet pickup, for instance, is the second-most popular among millennials and fifth-most popular among Gen Xers, Wiley said. Gen Xers and millennials are 35 percent more likely to be interested in a truck or SUV compared with pre-boomers and boomers.

"Vintage pickups offer a very affordable way into the hobby for a lot of collectors, so it makes sense that as you move from older to younger enthusiasts you see pickups move up the list in popularity," said Wiley.

American nameplates are, by far, the most popular with buyers of all generations but millennials, in particular, have a soft spot for Japanese cars, quoting them four times more often than

pre-boomers, Wiley said. Similarly, pre-boomers are three times more likely to seek information on British cars than millennials. German cars remain popular across generations.



This 1965 Mustang is more popular than ever with collectors.

GM Floats Boat With Latest EV Technology

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

To that end, GM created and unveiled its prototype all-electric boat at the Miami show. Nicholson said its name is Forward Marine FIRST.

"Our expertise in automotive electrification has supported the introductions in the last few years of some of the industry's best EVs," Nicholson said.

"We believe the time is right to begin exploring and leveraging General Motors engineering expertise, our economy of scale, and over half a century of marine industry expertise to do something other manufacturers cannot."

And that is exactly what GM has done, Nicholson said, with the prototype 24-foot all-electric pontoon boat, the Forward Marine FIRST. The all-aluminum prototype tri-hull pontoon boat is powered by a proven automotive grade propulsion system.

The proprietary hull is designed to maximize power and range and is made of one-eighth-inch aluminum alloy.

The propulsion system is strategically positioned and integrated with a mid-ship-mounted battery pack and drive unit, which provides power to the out-drive through a drive shaft.

"At the heart of this boat is a 60kWh battery that can provide over 10 hours of cruising, a top speed of over 20 mph, and can be recharged using standard 110V outlet or a 220V SAE charge station," Nicholson said.

"Think about it — minimal maintenance, no refueling, no mess, no extra fuel costs, and virtually silent operation. This is the boat that will make relaxation more relaxing."

"Imagine having the ability to enjoy drinks straight from the

onboard refrigerator, make some food on an electric grill, watch the onboard TV, and keep all your favorite electronics charged all day on this beautiful boat."

GM is currently exploring how this prototype improves the boating experience, Nicholson said. "The company is excited about the boat's prospects in the marketplace and we ask that people who have seen the boat provide feedback at the Web site ForwardMarine.com."

Air Bag Investigation Drags

DETROIT (AP) — Nearly four years ago, the U.S. government's highway safety agency began investigating air bag inflators made by ARC Automotive of Tennessee when two people were hit by flying shrapnel after crashes.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimated that 8 million Fiat Chrysler, Hyundai, Kia and GM vehicles in the U.S. use the company's inflators. The investigation became more urgent in 2016 after a Canadian woman driving a Hyundai was killed by shrapnel from an ARC inflator.

But public records posted by

the agency show little progress on the probe, which began in July of 2015 and is unresolved.

Now another person has been hurt by an exploding ARC inflator, this time in a General Motors vehicle. Safety advocates say the slow investigation is a symptom of an agency that has done little to regulate the auto industry.

"That's really unacceptable. NHTSA should have gotten on top of it sooner," said Rosemary Shahan, president of California-based Consumers for Auto Reliability and Safety. "It's just really painfully obvious that it's a (safety) defect."

The agency said the investigation remains open "as we continue to review information with ARC and the vehicle manufacturers that may have had ARC inflators installed."

A spokeswoman did not respond to questions asking about the length of the probe. ARC's communications office did not return multiple telephone and email messages seeking comment Feb. 19 and Feb. 20.

ARC inflators are similar to dangerous devices made by bankrupt Takata Corp. of Japan. Both use the explosive chemical ammonium nitrate to create a small explosion to inflate the bags in a crash, and both can blow apart metal canisters that hold the chemical. But unlike Takata, ARC of Knoxville uses ammonium nitrate only as a secondary method of inflating.

At least 23 deaths have been reported worldwide due to Takata air bag inflators; there has been only one known death linked to ARC's inflators.

In mid-February, NHTSA posted documents saying that GM would recall 1,145 Chevrolet Malibu sedans from the 2010 and 2011 model years after finding out that a driver had been injured by an exploding ARC inflator. ARC said it's the only inflator rupture known to have happened in 1.2 million GM vehicles with ARC inflators, including 2008 to 2012 Malibus as well as 2007 to 2010 Saturn Auras, made at a factory in Kansas.

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GM's Investing Millions in Michigan Sites

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Davis, GM executive vice president of Global Manufacturing.

Since 2009, GM has invested more than \$600 million in the Lansing Delta Township plant.

Lansing Delta Township assembly, GM's newest assembly plant in the United States, has built more than 2 million crossovers since the facility opened in 2006.

"With over 110 years of automotive history in the Lansing area, LDT is proud to be the first U.S. manufacturing facility to be a Gold Certified Leader in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)," Barra said.

"Today, the plant operates two shifts of production and employs approximately 2,600 employees."

GM has strong presence in Michigan with more than 51,000 employees working at 33 locations, Flores said.

She added that Michigan is home to more than 3,100 GM suppliers with more than \$10 billion spent with those suppliers annually.

Lansing Delta Township/Lansing Regional Stamping statistics:

- Facility size – 3.6 million square feet.
- Employees – approximately 2,421 hourly at the assembly facility, 212 at the stamping facility.
- Salaried – 214 at the assembly facility, 18 at the stamping facility.
- Facilities – stamping plant, body shop, paint shop and general assembly facility.
- Highlights – advanced technologies, including 3D printing onsite and collaborative robots.

Since its opening, more than two million crossovers have been built at the site, Flores said.

The Romulus plant originally opened in 1976 as part of GM Detroit Diesel Allison Division, making diesel engines and components.

Romulus began to produce engines in the 1980s, and through the years, has produced more than 10.8 million V8 engines and more than 6.6 million V6 engines.

China Reports Another Drop In Car Sales

BEIJING (AP) – China's auto sales fell for an eighth month in January, extending a decline for the biggest global market.

An industry group, the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, says purchases of sedans, SUVs and minivans fell 15 percent from a year earlier to just over 2 million vehicles.

Auto demand has weakened as Chinese economic growth cooled and a tariff fight with Washington fueled uncertainty among buyers. The slump is a setback for OEMs that are looking to China to drive revenue.

Sales by Chinese brands fell 22 percent while global brands gained market share.

Purchases of electric and hybrid vehicles, which Beijing is promoting with subsidies, rose 138 percent over a year earlier to 96,000 units.

2020 Acadia Built Around Latest Technology

The new 2020 GMC Acadia combines the latest vehicle technology with style and entertainment tech for a vehicle that drivers can rely on.

Smarter technologies in the 2020 GMC Acadia, including a new available turbo engine and the latest GMC infotainment system1, along with a fresh look, offer greater versatility for customers on the go, said Duncan Aldred, vice president of Global GMC. The lineup includes SLE, SLT, a new AT4 trim and GMC's flagship Denali, with available seating arrangements for five, six or seven passengers, depending on the model.

"The 2020 Acadia is stylish, functional and capable with more of the smart convenience and connectivity features that customers rely on every day," said Aldred. "And with GMC's signature refinement at its core, the new Acadia advances the brand's commitment to offering premium vehicles for discerning crossover customers."

Design and technology enhancements on the new Acadia include a bolder exterior design with standard LED lighting and signature GMC C-shape lighting, complemented with interior refinements, Aldred said.

This features the first-ever Acadia AT4 with more aggressive exterior styling and darkened finishes and features new available 2.0L turbocharged engine that uses an innovative tripower



2020 GMC Acadia

valvetrain and dual-scroll turbocharging technologies to help optimize performance and efficiency in all driving conditions.

The Acadia AT4 also uses GM's new nine-speed automatic transmission developed to provide a greater balance of performance and efficiency, along with enhanced refinement, as well as new Electronic Precision Shift that replaces the conventional shifter with an electronic control that frees up interior room, including a more versatile center console with greater storage space.

The Acadia comes with an enhanced GMC infotainment system that is more intelligent and intuitive, offering new features designed to help improve the

user experience and offer more personalization and a new Head-up Display (late availability).

"With technological enhancements at your fingertips and under the hood, the 2020 Acadia is an intelligent crossover that elevates the driving and passenger experiences on all fronts," said Aldred. "That makes it a smart choice all around."

And at a glance, the '20 Acadia distinguishes itself with a new grille, new front and rear fascias and GMC's signature C-shaped lighting, Aldred said.

The new Acadia AT4, he said, expands the reach of GMC's newest sub-brand. Its bold styling cues, including a black chrome-accented grille, add a rugged, off-road-inspired

design to the Acadia range, said Aldred.

A 3.6L V6 engine producing 310 hp and 271 lb.-ft. of torque and a twin clutch AWD system are standard to the AT4. Unique 17-inch wheels and all-terrain tires are also standard, with 20-inch wheels.

Additional design and refinement enhancements for the 2020 Acadia include new 18- and 20-inch wheel designs depending on the trim and outside mirrors with integrated LED turn signals (power-folding feature standard on Denali and available on SLT trim), Aldred said.

The vehicle comes with a new 2.0L Turbo engine standard on SLT and Denali models, expanding the Acadia's propulsion choices for customers and adding a new dimension to its performance, said Aldred.

The tripower valvetrain complements the turbocharging system to make the most of the engine's available power at all speeds, Aldred said.

The new Acadia is the latest GMC with Electronic Precision Shift, which enables more storage room in the center console by replacing the conventional transmission shifter with an electronically controlled gear selection consisting of intuitive push buttons and pull triggers.

All engine offerings feature a stop/start deactivation switch.

The 2020 GMC Acadia goes on sale this fall, and is made at GM's Spring Hill, Tenn., assembly plant.

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Navigator Finds Itself on Top of Best List

The 2018 Lincoln Navigator is an SUV that best delivers on performance and luxury, at least according to the people at Edmunds.com.

They named the Navigator as the best luxury SUV in the Web site's 2019 Edmunds Editors' Choice Awards.

They wrote that Lincoln's full-size luxury SUV delivers in the categories that matter most to consumers, said Lincoln spokeswoman Anika Salceda-Wycoco. The awards are based on tests in 27 criteria, including driving and performance, comfort, interior and technology.

Lincoln Navigator sales kept their momentum all through 2018, posting a 43.6 percent gain in December on tight inventory, according to sales statistics, Salceda-Wycoco said. High-series Lincoln Black Label and Reserve Navigators represented 90 percent of the SUV's sales mix.

"Our editorial team tests more than 300 vehicles a year — that's more than a collective 17,000 hours behind the wheel," said Alistair Weaver, editor-in-chief at Edmunds. "We're going beyond what's hot and new to showcase the best of the best from all the cars on sale today. An Edmunds Editors' Choice winner represents the gold standard of automotive excellence."

Edmunds editors also called the Navigator "one of our favorite luxury SUVs. Last year's redesign enhanced the Naviga-



Edmunds rated the 2018 Lincoln Navigator "best luxury SUV."

tor's already impressive capability to carry people and tow heavy loads. It also ushered in fresh styling and new features. This new Lincoln is at the head of the class against its American counterparts and likely earns front-row status with valet attendants, too.

"We think the 2019 Navigator wears Lincoln's new design language well. It has both presence and style, even when parked next to SUVs from well-established marques such as Mercedes-Benz and Range Rover. Under the hood is an impressive turbocharged 3.5-liter V6 that cranks out a stout 450 horsepower and 510 pound-feet of torque. All that massive power gets to the ground via a 10-speed auto-

matic transmission. And while 10 speeds may seem like overkill, you'll hardly notice the shifting, and the additional gearing helps improve both acceleration and fuel economy."

Editors also praised the Navigator for not ignoring the SUV's interior.

"Inside, the Navigator uses top-notch materials on every panel. There are three rows of adult-size seating, a massive amount of cargo space, and modern tech behind the prominent infotainment screen," editors wrote.

Lincoln sales statistics show more than 55 percent of Navigator sales are conquest, with buyers coming from brands like Mercedes, Cadillac and Land Rover.

Ford Uses New Technology When Designing Explorer

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driving dynamics lab, said Paterson.

Parker Lewis, Ford noise, vibration and harshness engineering manager, said keeping noise out of the cabin with the dual-wall dashboard is similar to the technology used to keep drinks hot or cold.

"This innovation is very similar in theory to an insulated thermos or mug," said Lewis. "The multiple layers of a mug keep unwanted ambient temperatures out, while the multiple layers of this dual-wall dashboard keep unwanted noise out of the vehicle cabin."

Keeping wind and road noise out is key to creating a quieter cabin that passengers can enjoy, said Lewis, but identifying how that noise gets in in the first place is just as important.

Just like the multiple layers of the new dual-wall dashboard, Explorer's windshield and front side windows have not just one layer of glass, but two, said Lewis, adding that the layers are separated by a sheet of clear plastic, creating layers that serve as a buffer between the interior and the outside world.

As new powertrain technology finds its way into today's vehicles, it can make for unique sound experiences for passengers, said Lewis, so the root cause of noise is not limited to that created by propulsion, wind or the road. He noted that low- and mid-frequency noise can contribute to driver fatigue, while higher frequencies can inhibit the ability to hold a conversation in a moving vehicle.

Ford's solution is Active Noise Control, said Lewis, available only on Explorer Limited Hybrid, which uses strategically placed microphones throughout the cabin to listen for and pick up on unwanted frequencies that contribute to noise conditions. Once unwanted frequencies are discovered, he said, the system cancels them out by producing opposing sound waves that come through the audio system speakers.

"Think of it as thunder on a stormy night," said Lewis. "These sound waves bounce around us in a contained area, then the vehicle's audio system speakers negate the thunder, essentially silencing the environment."

Together, the dual-wall dashboard and acoustic glass work to insulate passengers from unwanted sounds, while Active Noise Control cancels them out if they make it in at all, giving the new Explorer a noticeably quieter interior, Lewis said.

He added that by establishing test parameters through decades of SUV customer feedback, an engineer can not only determine the level of quiet a buyer wants, but identify areas where the all-new Explorer can be made even quieter.

"How all those pieces and elements coming together fit, and what they are made from are critical questions for us to ensure proper assembly to reduce gaps that can allow wind noise in in the first place," said Lewis.

A new driving dynamics lab is the latest addition to Ford's suite of noise, vibration and harshness testing facilities. The lab allows engineers to test vehicle sound in different settings, including a semi-anechoic chamber with powered rollers to simulate road noise, and in temperatures ranging from minus 40 degrees to 140 degrees Fahrenheit to shrink and expand materials that may cause squeaks and rattles.

Different parts of the vehicle are tested in the lab's anechoic chamber and reverberation suite. The first provides an area free of echo and reverberation and creates a pure working environment for sound, while the second is used to determine how noise permeates full components or materials, such as sheet metal. The new 2020 Explorer is the first product to emerge from Ford's new driving dynamics lab.

The new Ford Explorer is manufactured at Chicago Assembly Plant and arrives in dealer showrooms this summer.

BorgWarner Buys Company

Recognizing that the demand for electric and hybrid propulsion systems is growing rapidly and goes beyond mainstream passenger and commercial vehicles, BorgWarner has acquired two Oregon-based businesses.

BorgWarner formed Cascadia Motion LLC to acquire assets and merge the operations of the companies — Rinehart Motion Systems LLC and AM Racing Inc. Cascadia Motion will retain an entrepreneurial culture and explore the wide variety of electric and hybrid propulsion solutions for niche and emerging applications, said BorgWarner spokeswoman Kathy Graham.

"Rinehart Motion Systems and AM Racing are two established

companies in the specialty electric and hybrid propulsion sector," said Hakan Yilmaz, chief technology officer, BorgWarner. "Bringing them together as Cascadia Motion will allow us to offer design, development and production of full electric and hybrid propulsion systems for niche and low-volume manufacturing applications."

Cascadia Motion will use the strengths of both companies to incubate new technologies. Rinehart Motion Systems brings expertise in propulsion inverters and controls for electric and hybrid EVs in professional motorsports, motorcycles, specialty road cars, bus, and heavy-duty sectors, Graham said.

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Meeting 2: 11:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m. (lunch included)

Location: Courtyard by Marriott Detroit Warren
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Ford Brings Back Youth Driving Program

You've bought a car for your teenager, so now what?

Ford Driving Skills for Life is celebrating 16 years of its award-winning driver safety program. As Ford Driving Skills for Life turns "Sweet 16" – the traditional driving age across most of North America – its 2019 national tour will kick off at NRG Stadium in Houston, said Ford spokeswoman Marci Frick.

The stop will be the first of more than 60 free, hands-on driver training sessions for teens and parents in 14 cities across the United States. More than 6,000 people in the U.S. will get behind the wheel this year with professional drivers on a specially designed course to learn advanced maneuvers that can help keep them safe, Frick said. Class dates will be announced later this year.

As Ford Driving Skills for Life continues to move forward and adapt to changing driver behaviors and new road safety concerns, the program will again introduce innovative tools and add specialized programming to enhance the learning experience for new drivers.

This year's Ford Driving Skills for Life program include:

- Innovative new sleep suit technology to demonstrate the dangers of drowsy driving.
- New training module to explain how to use ever-improving vehicle safety technology.
- Expanded program for the unique circumstances of driving in rural and emerging markets.
- Addition of a parent module to assist in teen training away from Driving Skills for Life events.
- U.S. communities that are new participants in the program's hands-on training.



Ford's Driving Skills for Life program is returning to Michigan in 2019.

"Everything we do is designed to reduce crashes and fatalities by helping new drivers develop essential skills, gain experience and improve decision-making," said James Graham, global manager, Ford Driving Skills for Life.

"We keep a close watch on new trends that impact driving behavior and capture the attention of teens and parents with training that is not only beneficial, but interesting and fun, as it promotes safe, smart driving."

Following its 2019 launch in Houston, the Ford Driving Skills for Life tour will move on to California, Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Colorado, North Carolina, New York and, Arizona. A summer mountain tour will visit Billings, Mont.; Cheyenne, Wyo.; and Spokane, Wash.

The program will continue to collaborate with the Governors Highway Safety Association and its member states in addressing the issues facing new drivers.

"We could not be more thrilled to continue our long partnership with Ford Driving Skills for Life," said Jonathan Adkins, executive

director, Governors Highway Safety Association.

"The program clearly and effectively addresses the challenges faced by newly licensed drivers and their parents. We're excited to see new additions this year that will contribute to the success of the Ford Driving Skills for Life program."

The Governors Highway Safety Association reports teen drivers have crash rates three times higher per mile driven than drivers age 20 and older.

The association also notes that despite progress toward reducing teen driving deaths, drivers 16-20 years old involved in fatal crashes increased by 3.6 percent in 2016. Ford's award-winning Driving Skills for Life program pairs hands-on ride-and-drive clinics with an emphasis on the dangers of drunk, drugged and distracted driving.

"Each year, we have a new group of inexperienced drivers hitting the roads," said Graham. "Programs such as Ford Driving Skills for Life are critical to helping keep new drivers safe on the roadways. Programs like ours help save lives."

Ram 1500 Tops Edmunds Editors' Pickup Truck List

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

each vehicle on more than 30 criteria across five categories, said FCA spokesman Nick Cappa.

Vehicles are subjected to that gauntlet to ensure winners represent the gold standard of automotive excellence and worthy of the Editors' Choice designation, he said.

The editors wrote: "The new 2019 Ram 1500 is a no-compromise truck, leading in luxury, efficiency, capability and innovation. Ram leads the full-size truck segment with significant gains in fuel efficiency through a new eTorque mild hybrid system in both V6 and V8 configurations."

They noted that overall weight for the Ram 1500 has been reduced by 225 pounds, the frame using advanced materials and engineering to eliminate 100 pounds while increasing stiffness and durability for 12,750 pounds of towing capability and 2,300 pounds of payload.

"A mild hybrid engine assist technology called eTorque appears on this new Ram," they wrote. "Not a hybrid technology in the traditional sense of a gas-electric car, eTorque stores electricity in a lithium battery and helps the automatic engine stop-start system work more smoothly."

"It also provides a bit of extra power in short bursts. For now, the Ram's previously available 3.0-liter diesel V6 isn't offered, but it could show up in the 2020 model."

They also liked that "inside, the Ram delivers new technology, highlighted by an optional infotainment system with a massive 12-inch touchscreen display, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto,

and multiple USB ports. (Ironically, a single CD player is optional only on higher trim levels.)

"The new Ram's predecessor was one of the older designs among American half-ton pickups, but no more. Sharpened new design, additional technology, and increased capability vault the 2019 Ram 1500 back to its place as one of the top achievers in its class."

The new Uconnect 4C with a massive 12-inch touchscreen leads the pickup world with technology, featuring split-screen capability, 360-degree camera views and exclusive content from SiriusXM with 360L, Cappa said, adding that active safety and security systems join the technology onslaught with adaptive cruise control, automatic emergency braking and blind-spot monitoring.

Edmunds guides car shoppers online from research to purchase with in-depth reviews of every new vehicle, shopping tips from an in-house team of experts, plus a wealth of consumer and automotive market insights, said Cappa. Edmunds, he said, helps millions of shoppers each month select, price and buy a car with confidence.

Regarded as one of America's best workplaces by *Fortune* and *Great Place to Work*, Edmunds is based in Santa Monica, Calif., and has a satellite office in Detroit.

In 2009, the Ram Truck brand launched as a stand-alone division, focused on meeting the demands of truck buyers and delivering benchmark-quality vehicles, Cappa said, noting that that focus leads Ram to design the industry's most innovative, award-winning trucks.

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The service is part of the Remote Access Plan, which also provides mobile apps features like remote key fob services to remotely start, stop, lock and unlock properly equipped General Motors vehicles, and on-demand diagnostics to troubleshoot common issues.

“Our mobility services have developed a strong customer base and we are now taking the

“By creating an intelligent network of joint ventures, we will be able to shape current and future urban mobility and draw maximum benefit from the opportunities opened up by digitalization, shared services and the increasing mobility needs of our customers. Further cooperations with other providers, including stakes in startups and established players, are also a possible option.”

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