



The new Acadia was designed to have a bold presence on the road.

2020 GMC Acadia Focuses On Style, Function, Tech

GMC has always had a history of bold design and the brand has kept that tradition going with the introduction of the 2020 Acadia SUV, said George Jones, marketing manager for GMC Crossovers.

"If you look at the Sierra Denali, you will see that it has unique grille and headlights design," Jones said. "When you look at the new Acadia, you will see a new blend of grille, styling and headlights that evokes GMC, and is bold in design."

After the current design of the

GMC Acadia was launched in 2016, people at the brand asked buyers for their feedback on styling and features that they liked and might want in the future, Jones said.

For example, one thing they kept hearing was that they wanted headlights that were both functional and stylish.

"They wanted a look that stood out and worked, so now all the headlights use LED technology," Jones said. "We now include

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Ram 1500 Beats 'Ike's Gauntlet' to Win Gold

When it comes to going for the gold, the 2019 Ram 1500 has done it.

The Fast Lane Truck (TFLtruck) has awarded the new 2019 Ram 1500 with a Gold Hitch award in the light-duty segment, said Reid Bigland, head of Ram Brand. TFLtruck is a Web site that reviews and writes about pickup trucks.

The 5.7-liter Hemi-powered Ram 1500 with eTorque mild hybrid technology bested competitors for outstanding pulling power, braking, fuel economy, comfort and handling under extreme towing conditions.

"The 2019 Ram 1500 and its 5.7-liter Hemi V8 eTorque system came out on top when compared to the competition on TFLtruck's 'Ike's Gauntlet' – the world's toughest towing test," said Andre Smirnov, managing editor at TFLtruck.com.

"All trucks pulled 9,100 pounds, and while the data we collected during our real-world testing demonstrated how close the competition really is, the new Ram 1500 stood out with available air suspension and technology features that made hooking up a trailer easier and the trailering experience more relaxed."

To rate the trucks, TFLtruck editors took to the notorious Eisenhower Pass – also known as "Ike's Gauntlet" – located outside

of Denver with a loaded trailer. The grueling climb reaches elevations in excess of 11,000 feet with increasing grade near the peak.

"The all-new 2019 Ram 1500 with eTorque mild hybrid system is the benchmark for durability and efficiency with a high level of technology and luxury not expected in pickup truck segments," said Bigland.

"The TFLtruck Gold Hitch award is expert recognition and derived from a real-world driving experience that our customers will appreciate when shopping for a new pickup."

The "Ike's Gauntlet" drive is

not the sole criteria to determine the winner. The Ram 1500 also rated highly on a number of additional features, Smirnov said. Judges liked the Ram's exclusive air suspension, ride and handling quality, interior superiority and new technology.

After all votes were counted, the 2019 Ram 1500 took the top spot.

Gold Hitch Award-eligible trucks include 2019 model-year pickups (or trucks from previous model years that have not significantly changed for 2019), Smirnov said. Trucks are only eligible for the award if they were tested before March 1.



The Ram 1500 proved it had what it takes on tough mountain roads.

Blazer, Silverado a Hit at Comerica Park

It's been said that Chevrolet is as American as baseball and apple pie. A visit to Comerica Park in Detroit will certainly give that impression.

Chevrolet and the Detroit Tigers are kicking off the 2019 home Major League Baseball season with the installation of two all-new vehicles atop the center field fountain at Comerica Park, a Motor City tradition now in its 10th year, said GM spokesman Kevin Kelly.

The red 2019 Chevy Blazer RS and silver 2019 Silverado 1500 LT Trail Boss enhance the ballpark's skyline view and complement the "Chevy Fountain" by centerfield at Comerica Park, Kelly said.

With more than 8,400 pounds of sheet metal hoisted into position by a crane, the vehicles remind fans in the ballpark and watching on TV of Chevy's relationship with American baseball and its deep roots in Detroit.

"This decade-old tradition allows us to celebrate Chevy's connection to baseball in our hometown, and it's a telltale sign that Opening Day is almost here," said Paul Edwards, U.S. vice president of Chevrolet Marketing.

"The all-new Blazer and Silverado represent innovation, endurance and personality – much like our great city of Detroit."

The Blazer and the Silverado 1500 LT Trail Boss showcase the quality, dependability and reliability needed to withstand the six-month baseball season, Edwards said. With a bird's-eye view of the field, these heavy-hitting vehicles will cheer on the Detroit Tigers at every home game, he added.

"Chevrolet and the Detroit Tigers are two of the Motor City's most iconic brands, and we're

honored to be celebrating the 10-year mark of this great tradition," said Chris Granger, group president of Sports and Entertainment at Ilitch Holdings Inc. "Chevy continues to be a great partner not only to the Tigers, but with all of us in the MLBfamily."

Chevy's connection to baseball extends from the backyard to the major leagues as the Official Vehicle of Major League Baseball and the Official Automotive

Sponsor of the PLAY BALL initiative, Edwards said.

Through Chevy Cares programs like Chevy Youth Baseball, kids are empowered to stay active, build self-esteem and learn teamwork – skills that can help them on and off the field, he said.

Since the Chevy Youth Baseball program launched in 2006, more than 8 million kids have participated in nearly 2,000 free clinics, Kelly said.



As the home opener nears, Chevy placed a Blazer at Comerica Park.



Incubator helped create Find Your Ford, a web site to find used Fords.

Looking for a Used Ford With A Specific Color and Options?

Most people think of new cars when talking about automakers selling vehicles, but Ford has a better idea – help customers buy used cars as well.

When 25-year-old structures engineer Arnold Kadiu first began working at Ford last year, he knew exactly what kind of used car he wanted to buy to mark the occasion: A long-bed, crew-cab F-150 with two-wheel drive and adaptive cruise control.

The dilemma for him was whether he would ever find it.

He learned quickly that searching for used cars online can be tricky, especially when looking for specific features.

To help improve the shopping experience, Kadiu and his colleague, 24-year-old autonomous vehicle engineer Leda Daehler, worked with Ford's incubator Ford X to create "Find Your Ford," a website for customers looking for their perfect used Ford vehicle.

Find Your Ford lets shoppers search for used vehicles from multiple dealerships in one place, reducing the need to scroll through individual dealer inventories separately.

It also lets customers filter results based on features they are most interested in – including those that are usually hard to pinpoint on other online sales sites, such as heated steering wheels and specific driver-assist technologies.

"Most people have experienced the frustration of settling for something less than desired," said Sundeep Madra, vice president of Ford X.

"Arnold and Leda, working with Ford's dealers and sales teams, have designed Find Your Ford to provide an easy, comprehensive way to sift through what's out there to find the per-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

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Oakland County's Patterson Has Cancer, Retiring

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) – Long-time Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson is fighting cancer and will not seek re-election next year to an eighth term in office.

The 80-year-old Patterson said March 26 that he has pancreatic cancer and will continue his duties this year. He received the official diagnosis March 15.

Patterson has been Oakland County's chief since 1993 and served as its prosecutor from 1973 to 1988.

Patterson's office says Chief Deputy Gerald Poisson will take over if there is a vacancy until a successor is appointed by county commissioners or a special election is held.

Patterson, a Republican, has a history of verbally sparring with other regional leaders, especially those in Detroit. He apologized last year after saying he'd rather join the Ku Klux Klan than a group of CEOs he had accused of snatching business from Oakland County to benefit Detroit.

Latest Acadia Doubles Down on Bold Styling

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

LED turn signal lights on all our sideview mirrors.

"People who bought the Denali version really liked the hands-free liftgate, so now all 2020 Acadias will have that feature available for people who want it."

And the 2020 Acadia comes with smarter technologies, including a new available turbo engine and the latest GMC infotainment system, along with a fresh look, offer greater versatility for customers on the go, Jones said.

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 Duncan Aldred, vice president of Global GMC.

"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."

Jones said the 2020 Acadia will have a variety of trim levels to meet every customer demand.

The AT4 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 Jones.

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 available.

Additional design and refinement enhancements for the 2020 Acadia include:

- New 18- and 20-inch wheel designs depending on the trim.
- Outside mirrors with integrated LED turn signals (power-folding feature standard on Denali and available on SLT trim).
- Redesigned center console with enhanced storage space.
- Unique Denali interior color scheme with new, open-pore wood decor.

A new 2.0L Turbo engine is standard on SLT and Denali models, expanding the Acadia's propulsion choices for customers and adding a new dimension to its performance, Jones said.

It leverages GM's innovative tripower valvetrain technology to vary valve lift across the rpm band, optimizing performance for varied driving demands:

- High valve lift for maximum power.
- Low valve lift for a greater balance of power and efficiency.
- Active Fuel Management (cylinder deactivation) disables two of the cylinders in light load conditions to optimize efficiency.

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

The turbo is a dual-scroll design developed to enhance low-speed torque delivery. Peak torque is available from 1,500 to 4,000 rpm for an exceptional feeling of responsiveness.

The engine is rated at a GMC-estimated 230 horsepower and 258 lb.-ft. of torque.

Both the proven 2.5L I-4 and the 3.6L V6 engines remain standard or optional equipment for

the 2020 Acadia, depending on trim level selected. All engine offerings feature a stop/start deactivation switch.

A new nine-speed automatic replaces the previous six-speed automatic as the standard transmission for the 2.0L, 2.5L and 3.6L engines offered in the 2020 Acadia.

The nine-speed's additional clutches and gears offer better optimized acceleration and efficiency, and engine noise is reduced during cruising for greater refinement, Jones said.

The 2020 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.

As connectivity continues to grow in importance for crossover customers, the 2020 Acadia delivers the latest GMC infotainment system that is more intelligent and more intuitive, Jones said.

It offers users improved voice

recognition, a higher resolution touchscreen and a simplified interface that requires fewer steps for some tasks, along with simpler screen layouts inspired by the latest smartphone technology.

"When people ask me what I like about the Acadia, I tell them that I drive one myself," Jones said.

"I love the ride because it makes me feel like I can handle anything."

"But at the end of the day, I have to transport my kids and their sports equipment to events. So I am glad it can easily be switched from an SUV that carries passengers to one that carries cargo."

"I love the functionality and the versatility."

"SUVs are very popular right now and the Acadia is a luxury vehicle that provides great service."

The 2020 Acadia will be in dealerships this fall.

GM has not yet released the price, but Jones said it will be competitive with other SUVs in its market niche.



"I love the functionality and the versatility," said Jones of his Acadia.

Sixth Graders Build Hydraulic Devices in MCC Challenge

by Jim Stickford

It's never too soon to consider a STEM career, which is why Macomb Community College held its fifth annual Fluid Power Action Challenge March 26.

MCC, along with Master Pneumatics of Sterling Heights and the Warren Consolidated Middle Schools' Mathematics Science Technical Center (MS²TC), staged the event, which involved about 125 MS²TC students.

The students built hydraulic devices at MCC's campus as part of a larger effort by the National Association of Fluid Power (NAFP) to encourage younger students to consider STEM careers when it comes time to make that choice.

Cathy Meyer, an engineering assistant at Master Pneumatics, said her company's president, Dave Hone, is a big believer in science education. The company is also a member of NAFP.

"Our company build fillers, regulators and lubricants for a number of industries, including the auto industry," Meyer said.

"As an NAFP member, we saw that they had programs to support STEM education, so a few years ago, we got together with MCC to create what would become an annual Power Fluid Challenge."

"They had facilities and expertise to lend and it was kismet that we would come together to work on this contest."

While Master Pneumatics and MCC act as sponsors of the event and helped create the contest, the students come from MS²TC.

Tari Michaelson is the head science teacher for MS²TC.

"This is our fifth year being involved in the contest," said Tari Michaelson, head science teacher for MS²TC. "I can tell you

that after putting on five contests, we've been able to refine the process to make it better every year."

The event is more than a one-day visit to MCC's south campus, Michaelson said. The contest is actually an eight-week program.

Participating students form teams and receive instructions. The different teams then work to build a device that perform certain functions using hydraulic power.

They have eight weeks to come up with a design of a machine that will perform the assigned tasks.

Michaelson said that while teachers at MS²TC and MCC can provide some guidance, it's up to the students to use what they've learned in class to design a machine as well as create a portfolio that contains the specs the machine is supposed to meet and the design of the machine the students have created.

"Among the tools that students get to use is a Computer Aided Design (CAD) machine that helps them create their machines," Michaelson said.

"They will also build their prototype in the eight weeks that led up to the March 26 contest, but they have to actually build their machines on the day of the contest. They only come here with the parts."

"They are given about two-and-a-half hours to complete their devices, then they have to actually operate their machines by working together."

"The devices are powered by hydraulic power. Then they get pizza."

Michaelson said the students come from MS²TC's sixth grade. Students got to form their own teams and give them cool names

One of the teams participating

was Team Viper, consisting of four sixth grade boys.

Viper member Ahmed Asad said he liked the fun part of the project and that he was interested in being an engineer himself.

"When I grow up, I would like to go to Wayne State or U-M," Asad said. "I am really interested in medical engineering, developing things like pacemakers. Maybe I might try automotive engineering."

His teammate Muhammad Ahmed said he really enjoyed working with a team.

"This helps grow friendships, and you're working with people and not all by yourself," Ahmed said. "I am not that much into engineering, but I think going into medicine would be cool."

Hadi Alnaschi said that he was just interested to learn what fluid power was.

"I thought it was about water, but hydraulics and hydraulic power is more than that," Alnaschi said. "It's about engineering and that's interesting."

The fourth Team Viper member, Humam Hassoo, said that he was inspired by his father Huzeyad.

"My father builds things in the basement," Hassoo said. "This reminds me of that and I like working with my friends."

Another team, which had three sixth grade girls, was called Team One.

Team member Allison Phillips said they weren't around on naming day and ended up just having to go with Team One.

"I signed up to participate because I thought it would be fun," Phillips said. "You get to make a machine and you get to do it with friends, and I like to be involved in big projects. This is really cool and I like the time pressure aspect of it."

Her teammate, Ava Demo, said she also liked being able to work with friends – and the hands-on aspect of the project. It was better than just sitting in a classroom, she said.

Marlana Mieczkowski was the third member of Team One. She said she liked the hands-on aspect of the project as well, but she also liked the presentation part of being able to talk about and show off their work.



From left, Ava, Allison and Marlana work on the initial stages of their hydraulic power device.

New Ford App Makes Finding Specific Used Vehicle Easy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

fect vehicle to meet their needs."

Once potential customers find a vehicle they're interested in, they can schedule a time to go see the car at the dealership, Madra said. Dealers will take the time to show the vehicle, arrange a test drive and help complete the purchase.

"The Find Your Ford platform helps customers build relationships with dealerships, so they have a trusted partner in their corner, whether they have questions about the vehicle's technologies or need an oil change," said Madra.

"Other sites sell them and leave them. We know the importance of customer support after the purchase and for the life of the vehicle."

While Daehler and Kadiu joined Ford to work on next-generation autonomous and electric vehicles, their plans for Find Your Ford quickly took off when Daehler told Kadiu of a similar shopping experience, searching for a Lincoln MKZ with a tan interior and adaptive cruise control – and driving eight hours away to pick it up.

Their project quickly found a home at Ford X, a division of Ford Smart Mobility that is responsible for incubating, testing and validating new ideas and business models via a series of in-market experiments.

"Leda and I both discussed our frustrations shopping for used vehicles and were able to turn those experiences into a new service, thanks to Ford X," Kadiu said.

"We were fortunate to join Ford at a time when the company is open to new ideas that can lead to real results."

Through Ford X, Daehler and Kadiu found the funding and support needed to design the Find

Your Ford website, engage dealers and put a pilot site together.

The two engineers also worked closely with Ford's Customer Experience team, which helps identify and fix customer pain points that have the highest potential to drive improved business results, from digital platforms to customer contact centers to improved retail and distribution models.

"Find Your Ford complements perfectly the Customer Experience team's broader work to help customers buy and service vehicles easier," Daehler said.

Ford is piloting the Find Your Ford platform in Metro Detroit with the participation of six dealerships, as well as exploring expansion to more dealerships and other markets.

Auburn Hills' Nexteer Gets New Honor

Nexteer Automotive, a global provider of intuitive motion control, recently announced that it has been recognized as a Manufacturing Leadership Awards winner for its outstanding achievement in Enterprise Integration and Technology Leadership, said Nexteer spokeswoman Summer Hou.

"We are honored to be recognized by the National Association of Manufacturers for the second straight year for our commitment and leadership in manufacturing excellence," said Dennis Hoeg, vice president and North America Division president, at Nexteer Automotive.

"This latest award demonstrates the impact that our Digital Trace Manufacturing effort is having on redefining global manufacturing processes, tools and predictive analytics."



The Alfa Romeo Experience uses 3D technology and is now available across multiple device platforms.

Alfa's 3D Tech Takes You on a Journey

Thanks to the latest 3D technology, it's now possible to have an Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio experience of driving without even getting in the car.

As part of the launch of the new Alfa Romeo marketing campaign, "Soundtrack," for the Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio and Giulia Quadrifoglio, the campaign is extending beyond traditional media into gamification through a collaboration with Unity Technologies, creator of the world's most widely used real-time 3D development platform, said FCA spokeswoman Diane Morgan.

The Alfa Romeo Experience is now available across multiple devices, including desktop, mobile and tablets, giving consumers the ability to test their talents on the track in the Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio and Giulia Quadrifoglio.

The "Soundtrack" campaign is currently running across TV, digital and social, including Alfa Romeo's YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels.

The television spot – "The Next Level of Joy" – includes broadcast coverage throughout the March NCAA college basketball season, extending viewership across CBS, TNT, and TruTV.

"Balancing precision and power, the 'Soundtrack' campaign illustrates the premier Alfa Romeo legacy and its connection to Monza, Italy, while introducing a one-of-a-kind driving performance," Morgan said.

The film, "The New Sound of Joy," demonstrates the capabilities of the Alfa Romeo Stelvio Quadrifoglio and Giulia Quadrifoglio in a beautifully unique tandem choreography that pushes the limits of both vehicles.

The film imagines the Autodromo Nazionale Monza as a gigantic musical instrument that brings to life the Giulia Quadrifoglio and Stelvio Quadrifoglio through a unique fusion of beauty and performance.

In an "epic symphony" of the senses, the Alfa Romeo drivers follow a specific line hitting musical logos at exact times producing the famous "Ode to Joy" melody by Ludwig Beethoven.

Job Skills Event Held for Area College Students

Students at Oakland Community College, Oakland University, Wayne State University and Walsh College will have the opportunity to learn how to polish their resumes to enable them to find their first jobs, OCC spokeswoman Bridget Kavanaugh.

The event is sponsored by the Web site LinkedIn and will be held at OCC's Royal Oak campus at 739 South Washington Avenue, between 3 and 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 2, Kavanaugh said.

"LinkedIn is the number one professional networking site, but do you really know how to leverage LinkedIn to make it work best for you as a college student for career search or as a working professional for business development and networking?" Kavanaugh asked.

"Bring your laptop and phone with the LinkedIn app and join us as Brenda Meller, owner and marketing consultant at Meller Marketing delivers a hands-on workshop to help you optimize your use of LinkedIn."

The event will feature seminars on resume writing and those attending will have a chance to have their resumes reviewed by professionals. Go to oaklandcc.edu to learn more.



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BLUETOOTH FOR PHONE
REAR CAMERA
REMOTE KEYLESS ENTRY
ALUMINUM WHEELS
CRUISE CONTROL



2019 EQUINOX LS
1.5L TURBO DOHC ENGINE
ALUMINUM WHEELS
KEYLESS ENTRY
DEEP TINTED GLASS
STK# T9204

\$169 WITH 24^{MONTH} 12^{MONTH} PER YEAR

\$1499 DOWN



2019 MALIBU RS
STK# 95265

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\$1499 DOWN

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6 SPEED AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION
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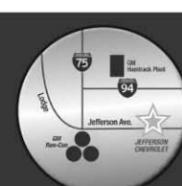
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Daimler to Join Forces with Chinese Firm

BERLIN (AP) – German automaker Daimler and China's Geely, its largest single shareholder, said March 28 that they are setting up a joint venture to develop and operate Daimler's Smart compact car brand worldwide as an all-electric car.

The two companies said the 50-50 joint venture should be finalized by the end of this year. They didn't disclose financial details.

The agreement calls for the next generation of Smart cars to be designed by the Mercedes-Benz design network, with engineering by Geely. The companies said the electric models will be assembled at a new factory in China and global sales are expected to begin in 2022.

Daimler CEO Dieter Zetsche said that, separately, his company's Mercedes-Benz division will produce a compact electric vehicle at the existing Smart plant in Hambach, France.

Production and sale of Smart cars began in 1998. They are currently made in Hambach and, under a partnership agreement with France's Renault, at a Renault plant in Novo Mesto, Slovenia.

The brand had already embarked on plans for a switch to all-electric propulsion, with only electric Smarts sold in the U.S., Canada and Norway since 2017.

Ford Using Local Contractor to Revamp Train Station

As Ford works to rebuild the historic Michigan Central Station, it is only fitting that one of its contractors has herself made history.

Four decades ago, when Adrienne Bennett earned her plumber's license, she became the first woman in Michigan to successfully complete a plumbing apprenticeship program in the state. A few years later, when she became a licensed master plumber and plumbing contractor, she was the first female in North America to do so, said Ford spokeswoman Christina Twelftree.

Bennett has since turned her expertise with copper pipes and HVAC systems into a growing construction and maintenance business, Benkari LLC. Along with around a dozen workers, the firm has worked on some of the biggest projects in the city. Now it can add Michigan Central Station to the list.

In the fall, Ford Land hired Benkari as a plumbing contractor to help winterize and dry out the iconic station, which has sat empty for more than 30 years. Benkari has installed a temporary system to get water out of the building and protect it from any further deterioration.

"I've always been awestruck by the train station," Bennett said. "It's an honor to be involved in its restoration and play a part in bringing it back to life."

Bennett is one of the first of many Detroit-headquartered con-

tractors Ford has committed to hiring on the site – part of a goal, set out in the Community Benefits Agreement, to make half the workforce at the station be Detroit residents, Twelftree said.

Ford has also earmarked \$5 million for workforce training and development to build a pipeline of talent to meet the different needs on site, including stone masonry, mechanical and electrical work.

It was just such a program that brought Bennett into the industry. At a 1976 rally for Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign, Bennett was approached by a recruiter looking to promote minority women in the construction trades.

Other female recruits dropped out, but Bennett persevered, overcoming many challenges: working in extreme weather, being a young woman in a male-dominated industry and even traveling two hours each way for her first job.

Her determination helped Bennett not only earn her historic licenses, but also become a plumbing inspector and a code enforcement officer for the city, all before founding Benkari with her son a decade ago, Twelftree said.

Along the way, Bennett has had a front seat to Detroit's rebirth, helping build the Millender Center apartments downtown, a major expansion at Henry Ford Hospital and the current restora-

tion of the Theodore Levin Federal Courthouse.

She was plumbing inspector for the restoration of the Fox Theatre in the 1980s. And not long after founding Benkari, the Bennetts landed a job on Little Caesars Arena.

Now, the renovation of Michigan Central has brought Bennett, and Detroit, full circle, Twelftree said.

When she was a child, her family moved here from Chicago. Like so many, her first experience of Detroit was through the marble grandeur of the station.

"It used to serve millions of people and was then thrown away," she said. "And now it's being restored. It's a blessing for the city."



Bennett will lead plumbing efforts in the Ford train station restoration.

Honda, Hino and SoftBank Partner Up on Autonomy

TOKYO (AP) – Japanese automakers Honda and Hino are joining a partnership between SoftBank and Toyota for mobility service innovation such as self-driving cars.

The announcement was made on March 29. Japanese technology company SoftBank Corp. and Toyota Motor Corp., the nation's top automaker, announced late last year a joint venture for mobility services, in what they called a "united Japan" effort to face global competition.

Honda Motor Co., Toyota's rival, and Hino Motors, Toyota's truck division, said last week each company will acquire a 9.9 percent stake in the 2 billion yen (\$20 million) Toyota-SoftBank venture Monet Technologies Corp.

Each company invests \$250 million yen (\$2.3 million), according to the companies.

Toyota and SoftBank also announced March 28 a Monet Consortium, which includes partnerships with 88 other companies, including Coca-Cola Bottlers Japan and East Japan Railway Co., to enhance mobility services.

Philips Japan, a health technology company, developer Mitsubishi Estate and Yahoo Japan Corp. have also agreed to join the consortium.

Technology experts say advances in artificial intelligence and sensors are opening up po-

tential for autonomous driving and other mobility services, although safety concerns remain a major hurdle.

Honda President Takahiro Hachigo said collaborating with Monet will include efforts to realize regulatory changes.

"Honda wants to contribute to the revitalization of the mobility service industry in Japan and solve traffic-related problems facing Japanese society," he said.

Yoshio Shimo, Hino president, said the move was part of the truckmaker's ongoing efforts to transport goods and people.

"Through this partnership, we will strive to achieve our vision of creating a world where people and goods move freely, safely and efficiently," said Shimo.

SoftBank owns 40.2 percent in Monet Technologies; Toyota owns 39.8 percent.

In announcing the partnership in October, Toyota President Akio Toyoda said the move reflected the company's desire to change and keep up with global competition in autonomous vehicles and other technology.

Toyota is widely seen as a traditional Japan Inc. company, while SoftBank, led by Masayoshi Son, has a reputation for aggressively investing in less traditional brands, such as car-sharing companies Uber, Didi and Grab, as well as Arm, a leader in the internet of things, or IoT.

Ford Closing Russian Plants

MOSCOW (AP) – Ford has said it will close three factories in Russia, causing heavy job losses, as it pulls out of passenger vehicle manufacturing in the country.

The U.S. carmaker said it will stop making passenger cars in Russia by the end of June, closing vehicle assembly plants in St. Petersburg and Naberezhnye Chelny, as well as an engine plant in Yelabuga.

Ford said "significant employee separations are required." The Ford Sollers joint venture employs around 3,700 people in total in Russia, Ford said, adding that the total number of people leaving the company has yet to be determined.

The company blames a slow recovery in the Russian car market after an economic slowdown in recent years, and moves toward cheaper cars.

Ford will now focus solely on commercial Transit vans in Rus-

sia through its Ford Sollers joint venture. Russian partner Sollers will take 51 percent majority ownership of the joint venture, which was previously equally owned by both parties.

Ford didn't comment on whether any of the plants could be sold.

Ford Sollers has repeatedly paused or scaled back production at the St. Petersburg plant in recent years, citing low customer demand.

An independent trade union operating at the St. Petersburg plant has criticized the restructuring plans and said it would try to persuade the regional government to pressure Ford to reconsider.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Kozak told the *Vedomosti* business daily on March 27 that the government was in talks with Sollers about ways to support production of Transit vans.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

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Dodge//SRT Brand Entering 2019 NHRA Nationals

The Dodge//SRT brand will return as title sponsor of the NHRA Dodge Hemi Challenge, marking the 19th consecutive year of FCA US sponsorship of the popular NHRA Sportsman event at the historic NHRA U.S. Nationals.

The 19th annual NHRA Dodge HEMI Challenge will fire up Aug. 29-30 at Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis as part of the six days of race action at the 65th annual U.S. Nationals, said FCA spokesman Darren Jacobs.

The event showcases Super Stock/A-Hemi (SS/AH) NHRA Sportsman class competitors battling on the quarter-mile in 1968 Dodge Dart and Plymouth Barracuda machines powered by the Mopar 426 Hemi engine.

"The NHRA Dodge Hemi Challenge is a fan-favorite tradition at the U.S. Nationals, and we're proud to continue as title sponsor during one of the most prestigious events on the NHRA circuit," said Steve Beahm, head of Passenger Car Brands, Dodge//SRT, Chrysler and Fiat, and head of Parts and Service (Mopar) - FCA North America.

"It speaks volumes about the legacy of our brand at the drag strip and the passion of our fans to see Hemi-engine-powered vehicles from more than 50 years ago side-by-side in the staging lanes next to our modern-day Dodge drag cars."

The legendary 1968 Mopar "package" cars - so named because they were purpose-built as a distinct "package" for use solely on the drag strip - serve as precursors to the modern-day package car, the Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak.

Competitors will vie for the unique 426-lb. NHRA Dodge Hemi Challenge trophy, created as a callout to the 426 Hemi engine. All 16 drivers to reach the elimination rounds will receive cash rewards, with the winner walking away with the ultimate prize of the \$15,000 winner's purse.

"Fans love the Dodge HemiChallenge as much as our Sportsman racers do," said Brad Gerber, NHRA vice president and chief development officer. "The competition gets more intense every year."

Quicken Loans Detroit Demo Day Coming

DETROIT (AP) - Entrepreneurs and startups are invited to compete for \$1.2 million in funding to help grow their for-profit businesses through the 3rd Annual Quicken Loans Detroit Demo Day.

Applications from those wishing to receive one of the start-up loans are due April 22.

Once all the applications are reviewed, 15 finalists will be chosen to pitch their businesses live June 14 at the Fillmore Detroit.

A panel of experts will select seven winners overall. Prizes will be presented as a grant, interest-free loan or an equity investment ranging from \$50,000 to \$300,000 for each winner.

As part of the loan-judging process, three grant recipients also will be voted on by the Fillmore audience.

Applicants must be based in Detroit or committed to relocating into the city.

They also can't have exceeded \$2 million in annual revenue or raised more than \$1 million in capital.

According to Quicken Loans Detroit Demo Day records, the eight winners of the 2017 Demo Day event were able to grow their annual revenue 41 percent in 2018.

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Northwood Program Helps Keep Employees

In today's tight job market, the automotive industry is realizing the importance of attracting and developing individuals who can build careers in a field that often struggles with employee retention.

That's how Maritz Auto's Tariq Kamal described the need for his marketing consulting firm to offer, as a partnership with Northwood University, a dedicated automotive marketing and management major.

Maritz is offering internship positions to acquaint Northwood students with the business and connect with Maritz clients.

Maritz is a provider of marketing services to the automotive industry. Clients served out of the company's Southfield office include General Motors and Ford.

The partnership with Northwood University was formed to help develop the next generation of leaders in the automotive industry, Kamal said.

The announcement was made at the Future of Automotive Retail (FAR) 2.0 summit, held in Naples, Fla., and hosted by Maritz.

More than a hundred thought leaders, including executives from a dozen manufacturers, dealers, academics and industry professionals, recently gathered to focus on the importance of human capital in retail automotive.

The Maritz automotive team also will participate in a series of guest lectures to share its industry experience, as well as learn from the students, Kamal said. In addition, Maritz is creating a scholarship to assist Northwood University students who have chosen to study automotive marketing and management.

"Maritz is a people company, and we help our automotive clients improve their business re-

sults by applying our expertise in behavioral science to drive performance," said Terry Erwin, vice president of Maritz Auto.

"We do that within a strategic framework that focuses on attracting, engaging and retaining both employees and consumers. It just makes sense that we understand how the next generation of automotive professionals are preparing for their careers.

"It's important to listen to, talk and work with the students who have decided that the automotive business is where they want to be."

"Northwood has over 60 years of history working with the automotive industry, with more than 8,400 graduates employed in that

industry sector," said Elgie Bright, Northwood's faculty chair - automotive marketing and management degree. "We're pleased to add Maritz to our roster of highly regarded partner companies.

"About 92 percent of our program graduates gain employment in the automotive industry, in large part to the participation of companies like Maritz."

"By attending FAR 2.0 and working with Maritz, I learned so much more about the auto industry and the opportunities available to me.

"I left the conference even more excited to enter into the automotive sector," said Northwood student Kendall Schaus.

Nissan Told to Add More Outside Board Members

by YURI KAGEYAMA
AP Business Writer

YOKOHAMA, Japan (AP) - A Nissan committee set up to strengthen corporate governance after the arrest of former Chairman Carlos Ghosn said March 27 an investigation found he had wielded too much power and recommended the scandal-hit Japanese automaker add more independent outside directors to its board and to better oversee compensation and auditing.

In measures announced in Yokohama, where Nissan Motor Co. is headquartered, the governance committee said it concluded that the "root cause of the misconduct was the concentration of all authority in Mr. Ghosn."

The committee's findings, which were submitted to the company board, underline Nissan's efforts to distance itself from Ghosn's upcoming criminal trial.

Ghosn, who led Nissan for two decades and rescued it from near-bankruptcy, says he is innocent. Arrested in November, he has been charged with falsifying financial reports in under-reporting his compensation, and with breach of trust in having Nissan shoulder investment losses and making payments to a Saudi businessman.

Seiichiro Nishioka, a former judge and the co-chair of the governance committee, said the investigation found the problems were caused by what he called misconduct by an individual manager involving pursuit of personal gain, and were basically different from past wrongdoings at some other Japanese companies, such as accounting fraud.

The post of chairman at Nissan, which had been held by Ghosn, will be abolished, according to the committee's proposals.

"The facts show there were governance problems at Nissan," Nishioka told reporters, stressing that checks and balances needed to detect the wrongdoing were missing.

A group to monitor compensation will be made up of all outside independent directors, while groups to oversee director appointments and auditing will consist mostly of outside independent directors.

The governance committee has met several times, including to question Nissan executives to find out what led to Ghosn's arrest.

Nissan Chief Executive Hiroto Saikawa has denounced Ghosn as the "mastermind" of what he called professional financial misconduct, while declining comment on the criminal trial proceedings.

Ghosn has said the compensation was never decided or paid, Nissan never suffered the investment losses and the payments were for legitimate services.

The date of Ghosn's trial has not been set, but it is not expected to start for several months, which is routine for Japanese trials. Ghosn was released on bail earlier this month.

Governance experts say Nissan lagged behind other major Japanese companies, including rival Toyota Motor Corp., in governance measures, such as having outside board directors and instituting checks on compensation.

Bruce Aronson, an affiliated scholar at the U.S.-Asia Law Institute, New York University School of Law, who has taught in Japan and serves as an outside director at a listed Japanese company, welcomed what Nissan was doing as "a good step forward, in line with other Japanese companies."

In a telephone interview, Aronson said Ghosn's case is providing valuable lessons for Japan amid rapid globalization.

More than 90 percent of major Japanese companies have two or more independent outside directors on their boards, a ratio that has grown rapidly since 2015, when a new governance code was passed.

Nissan's evolving relationship with French alliance partner Renault SA complicates the issues.

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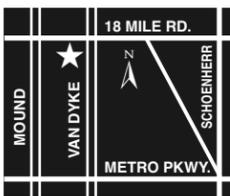


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PURCHASE FOR
\$26,209*

2019 GMC ACADIA SLE1
LEASE FOR
\$209* PER MONTH | 24 MONTHS | \$999 DOWN

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STOCK# G590829

PURCHASE FOR
\$26,459*

2019 GMC SIERRA 1500 ELEVATION EDITION
LEASE FOR
\$189* PER MONTH | 36 MONTHS | \$999 DOWN

NO GM EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT REQUIRED



STOCK# G591845

PURCHASE FOR
\$34,029*

2019 GMC CANYON DENALI
LEASE FOR
\$239* PER MONTH | 36 MONTHS | \$999 DOWN

NO GM EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT REQUIRED



STOCK# G591193

PURCHASE FOR
\$31,029*

2019 GMC YUKON SLE
LEASE FOR
\$389* PER MONTH | 36 MONTHS | \$999 DOWN

NO GM EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT REQUIRED



STOCK# W2MWT

PURCHASE FOR
\$46,369*

2019 GMC YUKON XL DENALI DEMO
LEASE FOR
\$669* PER MONTH | 39 MONTHS | \$999 DOWN

NO GM EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT REQUIRED



STOCK# G590638

PURCHASE FOR
\$66,039* MSRP \$81,820 • SAVE OVER \$15,000

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STOCK# 593095

2019 CHEVROLET EQUINOX LS

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LEASE FOR **\$159*** PER MONTH | 24 MONTHS | \$999 DOWN

NO GM EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT REQUIRED • STOCK# WQJTVV



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PURCHASE FOR
\$29,021*

LEASE FOR **\$179*** PER MONTH | 36 MONTHS | \$999 DOWN

NO GM EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT REQUIRED • STOCK# WKRMTD



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PURCHASE FOR
\$19,219*



LEASE FOR **\$209*** PER MONTH | 36 MONTHS | \$999 DOWN

NO GM EMPLOYEE DISCOUNT REQUIRED • STOCK# 490023

2019 CHEVROLET MALIBU LS

PURCHASE FOR
\$19,829*



LEASE FOR **\$209*** PER MONTH | 36 MONTHS | \$999 DOWN

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2019 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 1500 LIMITED CUSTOM DOUBLE CAB

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\$34,299*



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PURCHASE FOR
\$24,159*



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