



2019 Chevrolet Trax

SUVs, Trucks Boost Sales During Slow First Quarter

The sales figures for the first quarter of 2019 are in for the Detroit Three, with trucks and SUVs pulling sales for local automakers.

While all the automakers reported declines for the first quarter of the year – FCA down 3 percent, Ford down 1.6 percent and GM down 7 percent, there were bright spots in the sales reports.

FCA noted that the Ram brand set a new March sales record in 2019. Ford noted that SUV and truck sales numbers were solid, and GM reported that GM's new,

light-duty pickups were \$8,040 higher compared to their outgoing models in the first quarter of 2018.

Stephanie Brinley, principal analyst for IHS Markit, said that seeing a decline in overall sales shouldn't surprise anyone.

"Where we're at in 2019 sales is where we expected to be," Brinley said. "Many auto experts have predicted that 2019 will be a year of sales contraction. No one likes to see sales go down,

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Army, Suppliers Meet at MDEX Gathering

by Jim Stickford

The military and suppliers cannot to their jobs alone – they need to work together to develop the next generation of ground vehicles.

That was the message delivered at Macomb Community Col-

lege recently by Maj. Gen. Daniel Mitchell, commanding general at the U.S. Army's Tank Command in Warren.

Maj. Gen. Mitchell spoke at the 2019 Michigan Defense Expo (MDEX) on the south campus of the college saying that the event has two purposes.

"One is to get our message out about what's going on and our needs.

"The second is to collaborate with our partners."

The conference also provided area military contractors and

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From left, Eveland, Johnson, Cahilig and Dixon show off their robot Botiana at the recent 2019 Military Expo.



The Lingenfelter collection of classic cars will be available for viewing to help the American Cancer Society.

Lingenfelter Collection Fighting Cancer

It's not often that viewing classic cars will help in the fight against cancer, but that's what's happening on Saturday, April 27.

That's the day the Lingenfelter Collection is preparing to host a family-friendly open house to benefit the American Cancer Society, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Guests will have the opportunity to view the Lingenfelter collection, which consists of more than 180 vehicles that make up one of the greatest car collections in the world, said Lingenfelter spokesman Chris Morrisroe.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) funds and conducts research, shares expert information, supports cancer patients,

and spreads the word about cancer prevention. Guests attending the open house support the organization by making a monetary donation at the door. Since 2016, the Lingenfelter Collection Open House has raised more than \$100,000 for ACS.

"We are so thankful for our continued partnership with the Lingenfelters and their ongoing support of our mission," said Blythe Moran, executive director of the American Cancer Society in Michigan.

"The donations raised at this event will be put to work to save more lives from cancer, including supporting cancer patients with programs and services, funding

lifesaving research and helping prevent cancer in our community and across the nation."

Several activities are scheduled throughout the 40,000-square-foot showroom, including: experiencing two new racing simulators; limited-edition event poster signing by Ken Lingenfelter; startup of the Enzo Ferrari; door prizes; and refreshments and food from vendors, including Tony's Dog.

"We are once again very happy to be partnering with the American Cancer Society for our Spring Open House," said Ken Lingenfelter, owner, Lingenfelter Collec-

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New Escape Part of Ford's Plan to Grow SUV Niche

by Jim Stickford

Ford has made the SUV a pillar of the company's transformation plan and the Escape is the key vehicle in Ford's new SUV lineup, which is why the company has worked so hard to make the Escape the best vehicle in its class.

That was what Kumar Galhotra, group vice president and president, Ford North America, told reporters who attended Ford's unveiling of the 2020 Escape at a special event recently held at Greenfield Village in Dearborn.

The SUV segment is "hot," Galhotra said. Last year, Expedition demand was so high Ford added an additional 20 percent in production capacity to meet consumer demand.

And demand hasn't slowed down, Galhotra said. This year, Ford just announced that the

company is adding an additional 20 percent to capacity and will be hiring 550 more workers to meet new production goals.

And the Escape is even more popular than the Expedition, Galhotra said. Last year, Ford sold about 250,000 Escapes, making it the second-most popular model, only behind the F-150 truck. Competition in the small SUV segment is only going to get stronger, he said.

When the Escape was first launched, there were only six small SUVs being sold, Galhotra said.

"Today that number is 22, and soon it will be 30," Galhotra said. "So how do you stand out in such a crowded market? You design a distinct vehicle for your customer groups. The new Escape has been designed for the urban driver. It is slick and still

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2020 Ford Escape

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Lingenfelter Collection Fights Cancer

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tion and Lingenfelter Performance Engineering.

“Working with the organization over the years, we have learned so much about their programs and the many people they help. We look forward to seeing some of those people each year, as well as many car enthusiasts and community residents interested in supporting the work of the ACS.”

Morrisroe said that those attending will be able to witness the collection’s Enzo Ferrari being started at 3:15 p.m.

No tickets or reservations are required, Morrisroe said. Donations will be accepted at the door. One hundred percent of the proceeds will be donated to the American Cancer Society.

The Lingenfelter Collection address is 7819 Lochlin Drive in Brighton, Mich.

To learn more about the event, call 248-782-7359, or go to the lingenfeltercollection.com.

Military, Suppliers Gather at MDEX Event

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schools the opportunity to show off what they can do. This was the 10th anniversary of the first MDEX event, said Deanne Mazzola, MDEX chairwoman.

“The Michigan National Defense Industrial Association has been putting this event on for a decade,” Mazzola said. “This year, we have had 1,900 people from the government, small businesses and the auto industry reserve space on our showroom floor.”

MDEX is meant to bring together people from southeast Michigan to take advantage of the engineering and manufacturing resources that are here, Mazzola said. By getting together in one place, collaboration becomes much easier.

Maj. Gen. Mitchell talked about the Army’s needs in a changing international environment.

“Eastern Michigan has been a Mecca for ground vehicles and the automobile industry since before WWII. That’s why the Detroit Arsenal is here and why we have TARDEC and our Ground Systems Center here.

“None of us – the military and suppliers – can do our jobs alone. We are inter-dependent, and now, because of the synergy generated in this area, we will have teams in place to develop the next generation of Army ground vehicles.”

The Army is in the midst of developing the criteria for the new ground vehicles, and suppliers and engineers of southeast Michigan will have a major role in that development, Mitchell said.

Over the past several years, the U.S. military has been spending money on fighting two wars

around the globe. That has meant that new vehicle development has been put aside while money has been going to buy spare parts and keep its current vehicles running.

But now the Department of Defense is concentrating its efforts on developing the next generation of weapons and equipment.

“We face an international security environment that is complex and volatile,” Mitchell said. “Now our major competition is not terrorists, so we are making a shift to be ready for high intensity conflicts with near-peer competitors like Russia and China.”

The Fiscal Year 2020 budget will allow the Army to regain some of the competitive advantage it lost during the recent wars, Mitchell said. Right now, the Army is focusing on six elements – large-range precision firing technology, next-generation combat vehicles, future lift platforms that can transport troops and deliver weapons fire, Army technology networks that can operate in non-technical environments, air missile defense and soldier lethality.

“It’s important that you suppliers help us meet these new demands,” Mitchell said. “Now that we have the resources to reload and rebuild our next generation of equipment, we have to work with our enterprising partners to make the acquisition process more user-friendly and more streamlined. We are interdependent and share the common goal of making America safer by having an Army that is ready when called to duty.”

Mazzola said an additional purpose of MDEX is to promote the development of engineering and design expertise. To that end, several area high schools that participate in STEM extra-curriculars sent teams to MDEX.

Among them was the International Academy of Macomb. Team mentor Randy Eveland said that it’s a magnet school in Clinton Township that draws students from around Macomb County.

The school sent its I.A.M.ROBOT team to MDEX. The team participates in local and regional First Robotics competitions. The students build robots to perform specific tasks and compete

against other schools, Eveland said.

The robot that the students brought to MDEX is called Botiana, said sophomore student Jacob Johnson. He said I.A.M.ROBOT has taken Botiana to two different local competitions and done well with it.

Sophomore Emily Dixon said the team had to design a robot that could place round balls into different levels of a mock rocket-ship. The team succeeded by creating the most efficient methods of placing the “cargo” into the assigned slots on three different levels.

Part of participating in First Robotics competition is joining forces with other teams, Eveland said. Because the students want to win, they have scouts check out possible partner teams. I.A.M.ROBOT’s scout is Alexa Cahilig, a sophomore at the International Academy of Macomb.

“We want to win, so we want to team up with the schools that have the best robots,” Cahilig said. “It’s important to have done scouting when it comes time to

form alliances. We want to pick a winner.”

Eveland said that he works at Ally Financial and acts as a mentor to the students.

“I am not an engineer, but I do help with the business aspects of the project,” Eveland said. “Robots have to be built out of parts – and money has to be found to buy those parts. We like to say the teams run on three ‘Ms’ – money, materials and mentorships.”

To get the money needed to build robots, students will go to companies and ask for sponsorship, Eveland said. Among the companies that sponsored Botiana this year are Ford, Ally Financial and Home Depot.

“They get to have a sticker with their corporate logo placed on the robots they sponsor, much the same way NASCAR race cars have corporate stickers,” Eveland said. “I know the kids like to think parts appear by magic, but one of the lessons they are learning is that it takes money to make things happen.”



Mitchell talked about collaboration in building a strong defense base.

MCPED Director Appointed

Macomb County Executive Mark A. Hackel has appointed Vicky Rad as the director of the Macomb County Department of Planning and Economic Development (MCPED).

Rad, who previously served as deputy director of MCPED, replaces John Paul Rea, who was appointed deputy county execu-

tive in January, said Macomb County spokesman John Cwikla.

“Vicky is highly recognized and regarded statewide as an innovative leader for planning and economic development,” said Hackel. “Her outreach and passion for making Macomb County a welcoming place for business is a tremendous asset for the department and for the county as a whole.”

Prior to joining the county in 2013, Vicky Rad worked at the Detroit Regional Chamber and was responsible for the program management of Connection Point. She also worked at the Macomb Regional Procurement Technical Assistance Center.

Rad has a bachelor’s degree in computer information systems from Baker College, a Master of Science in administration with a concentration in leadership from Central Michigan University and a master’s certificate in government contracting administration from George Washington University.

She currently serves as chair for the Michigan Automotive and Defense Cyber Awareness Team (MADCAT) and is the immediate past president of the Michigan Chapter of Women in Defense, Cwikla said.

Rad is also involved in the program council for Leadership Macomb as well as the membership committee for Michigan Economic Developers Association.

In addition, she is also a board member of the organization Advance Michigan.

As specified by the Macomb County Charter, the county executive has the authority to appoint department directors, Cwikla said.

The April 5 appointment by Hackel must be confirmed in a vote by the Board of Commissioners.



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County to Hold IT Job Fair This Friday

Macomb County will be holding a professional job fair Friday, April 12, for individuals working in the engineering, design, IT/cybersecurity, procurement and project management fields.

The event will take place from noon to 3 p.m. at the Sterling Banquet and Conference Center (34911 Van Dyke, Sterling Heights), said Macomb County Vicky Rad, interim director, Macomb County Planning and Economic Development.

It will feature more than 25 companies and organizations that are actively hiring, including Abacus Technology, AM General, Army Contracting Command, BAE Systems, CBS Boring and Machine Company, DASI Solutions, Dominion Technologies Group, Eckhart (includes Autocraft and Polker Design Services), General Dynamics Land Systems, GroupeSTAHL, Intec Automated Controls Inc., MB Aerospace, Michigan Army National Guard, Michigan Production Machining, MNP Corp. - Utica, Nema, Paragon Technologies, Prestige Group, R&E Automated Systems, SMT Automation, Sonus Engineered Solutions, Universal Tool Equipment and Controls, Waltonen Engineering and ZF Axle Drive Marysville.

Register for the free event at www.macombgov.org. Questions can be directed to Janice Loftis at jloftis@macomb-stclairworks.

SUVs, Trucks Boost Sales During Slow First Quarter of 2019

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but projections currently have sales for the year to be about 16.8 million. That number shows that this is still a market where OEMs can make money."

The relative strength of SUV and truck sales shouldn't be a surprise, Brinley said. That's a trend that has been around a while and isn't likely to change. And SUVs and trucks tend to be more profitable than sedans, so there is good news for OEMs.

FCA saw the Ram 1500 sell 45,187 in March of 2019 compared with 41,307 in 2018. That represents a 9 percent increase. Sales of the Ram 1500 saw a 15 percent increase in the first quarter of 2019. FCA sold 120,026 in 2019, compared with 103,964 sold in 2018.

Ford reported a 4.1 percent increase in truck sales, with the company selling 278,898 in the first quarter of 2019, compared with 267,860 in last year's first quarter. The increase was driven by the new Ranger, which sold 9,421 in the first quarter of the year. The Ranger wasn't on sale in the first quarter of 2018.

F-Series sales in the first quarter were very stable. Ford sold 214,611 in 2019 for a 0.2 percent increase over 2018's first quarter sales of 214,191.

Ford reported that its SUV sales saw a 5 percent increase in the first quarter of 2019 compared with 2018. The company sold 213,086 versus 202,927.

"First quarter 2019 sales were solid for Ford," said Mark LaNeve, Ford vice president of U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service.

"Our winning portfolio continues to deliver. F-Series expanded our leadership position while others slugged it out for second place."

Expedition sales are up 61.9 percent, with 21,773 sold.

"We are adding capacity at our Kentucky Truck Plant this summer to keep up with demand. EcoSport is up 111.3 percent for the quarter and in March achieved its highest retail volume month since launch," LaNeve said.

GM's pickup truck sales, on the other hand, saw a slight decline in the first quarter. Silverado sales went from 135,545 to 114,313, representing a 15.7 percent decline.

Sierra sales saw a slight decline of 2.2 percent, going from 41,468 to 40,546.

Not all GM truck sales saw a drop. Sales for the Chevy Colorado saw a healthy 16.1 percent increase, going from 28,859 in the first quarter of 2018 to 33,494.

And, GM's SUV sales for Chevy Equinox went from 82,398 in the first quarter of 2018 to 88,500 in the first quarter of 2019, for a 7.4 percent increase.

Sales of the Buick Enclave went from 9,869 in 2018 to 12,580 in 2019 for a 27.5 percent first-quarter increase.

The Chevrolet Trax, Equinox and Colorado all set GM first-

quarter sales records and the GMC Acadia posted its best quarter ever. The new Cadillac XT4 was the best-selling vehicle in its segment and the Buick Enclave was up 28 percent from 2018.

The new full-size pickups from Chevrolet and GMC are also off to a very strong start, said Kurt McNeil, U.S. vice president, Sales Operations.

GM will begin the next phase of its full-size pickup truck launch in the second half of the year with the 2020 Chevrolet Sil-

verado HD and GMC Sierra HD.

FCA saw Jeep Grand Cherokee sales go up 26 percent in March of 2019. The brand sold 24,665 compared with 19,616 in 2018. But, overall, the Jeep brand sales declined by 7 percent in the first quarter of 2019, going from 228,105 to 212,804.

The industry had a tough first quarter, said Reid Bigland, head of U.S. Sales. But continued economic indicators lower lending rates and a strong labor market has FCA confident in the future.








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Ford Escape Offers Buyers a Range of Powertrain Choices

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capable of getting away from it all when the driver wants to.”

Galhotra said Ford chose to unveil the new Escape at Greenfield Village because the living museum is a celebration of American innovation and the Escape is a truly innovative small SUV.

Hau Thai-Tang, Ford’s executive vice president, Product Development and Purchasing, said the 2020 Escape is fourth-generation version, and is the smallest, but most advanced iteration of the vehicle. But Ford has not neglected design, he said.

“The design is modern, progressive and meant to stand out,” Thai-Tang said. “In this world, we fear the ‘C’ word which stands for commodified. So we went out to make the 2020 Escape a modern, new utility product. We made it to be flexible and it comes with a broad lineup of powertrains.”

Stephan Presser, Vehicle Engineering manager at Ford, said the 2020 Escape uses a flexible front-wheel architecture.

“A key observation about its design is that we’ve improved fuel economy without sacrificing fun and performance when you drive the Escape,” Presser said.

“We were able to achieve this by reducing weight and improving aerodynamics. And we made sure it’s a quiet vehicle. A quiet ride is something people associ-

ate with quality and we wanted to make sure the Escape gives a quiet driving experience. We achieved it with the latest in noise-canceling technology.”

Heather Fedullo, Vehicle Dynamics manager, said that the overall design of the 2020 Escape is wider, with a larger track and a lower center of gravity. And they managed to make the vehicle 200 pounds lighter by the use of new high-strength steels.

The steering system uses new electronic power assist technology designed to implement the vehicle’s driver assist technology. This includes cross-traffic alert tech, Ford’s Active Parking Assist 2.0 tech and adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go and lane-centering technology, Fedullo said.

Daniel Kok, manager of Advanced Electrified Powertrain Systems at Ford, said the new Escape comes with a variety of different powertrain options. Consumers can now choose between hybrid, plug-in hybrid, 1.5L EcoBoost and 2.0L EcoBoost with auto start-stop technology.

“One thing we’d like people to take away when they learn about the new Escape options is that we’ve given them fuel efficiency choices. Part of how we’ve been able to do that is with battery design. We’ve made flat batteries that we can put under the floor of the vehicle. This allows us to provide hybrid vehicle choices with-

out sacrificing cargo space. A definite plus when talking about SUVs.”

Dean Nowicki, global program manager for the Escape, said it was his job to bring all the different design and technology elements together.

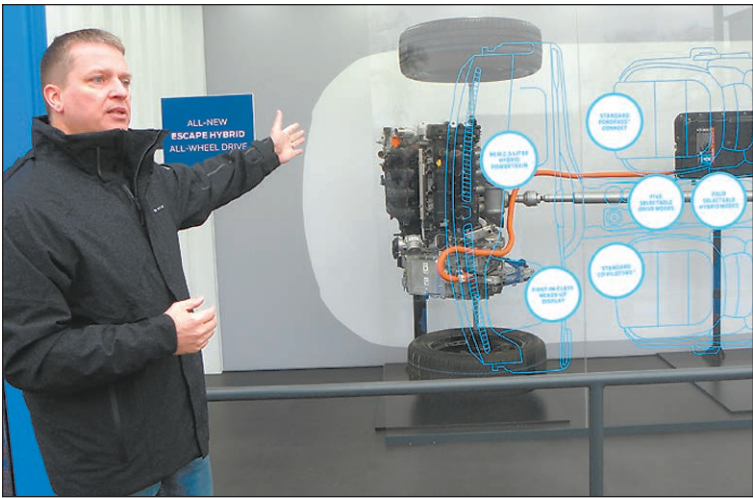
“We reduced weight from 3,501 to 3,286,” Nowicki said. “That gives the vehicle better fuel economy and the passengers a better driving experience. We were able to reduce weight through smart design. We optimized all component designs and used high-tech materials to reduce weight.”

Debra Hands, Escape aerodynamics supervisor, said Ford was able to use its wind tunnel to extensively test the Escape’s exterior design to reduce drag. She said Ford also gave the vehicle a smooth underbody. If someone looks underneath the Escape, they will see a flat surface.

Jim Hughes, chief engineer—Global Ford Escape, said the ultimate goal of all the new designs and engineering is to give the customers what they want – elegant functionality.

The vehicle is meant to look sharp. It is built on Ford’s front-wheel drive flexible architecture.

This is a worldwide platform that Ford is using, Hughes said. The same day Ford unveiled the Escape in the U.S., the automaker unveiled the SUV’s European counterpart, the Kuga.



Kok showed how a flat battery design freed up space in the new Escape.

Jennifer Comfort, Escape architecture supervisor, said that it was vitally important to make the Escape lighter without sacrificing interior space. Her goal was to make sure that the 2020 Escape could carry four golfers and four golf bags, and they were able to do that.

A sliding second-row seat, unique among small SUV entries, allows rear-seat passengers to increase legroom, knee clearance and footwell length for a more comfortable ride. With the second-row seat in the full-rearward position, the gas engine-powered Escape delivers best-in-class legroom, to complement improved headroom, shoulder room and hip room, Comfort said.

With the second-row seat in the full-forward position, the rear cargo area in gas engine-powered models extends nearly six inches to increase the cargo area to 37.5 cubic feet.

Hughes said that while the Escape is designed for the urban driver, it was still important to give the vehicle towing power.

Gas-powered Escapes can tow up to 3,500 pounds, and even the hybrid versions have a towing capacity of up to 1,500 pounds.

Hughes said Ford hasn’t forgotten about the kind of technology today’s driver expects in his or her vehicle.

The all-new Escape, Hughes said, features loads of connectivity technology, starting with Ford-Pass Connect, a standard feature.

Ford Fixes Flat Tire Problem

Ever since there have been inflatable tires, there have been flat tires, but Ford and Michelin have done something about that.

Flat tires happen all the time, and in the time it takes you to read this sentence, another vehicle tire was punctured, said Ford spokesman Dan Jones.

A flat tire is a huge inconvenience for drivers, Jones said. Road trip sidetracked. Commute delayed. Across the United States, flat tires will leave millions of motorists every year on the side of the road, jack in hand and gravel on knees.

Now, the new Ford Explorer offers a way to keep road-trippers on track as they #Explore-OurAmerica in the form of new Michelin Selfseal tires, Jones said. Designed to withstand common nail and screw punctures, these environmentally friendly tires are lined with a natural rubber sealant to fill most tread punctures and dramatically slow the rate at which air leaks – helping ensure your road trip continues without interruption.

“Nothing derails a family vacation like a flat tire,” said Joseph Billman, Ford wheel and tire engineer. “Explorer is the ultimate road trip family hauler – and it’s the perfect fit for these new Michelin Selfseal tires.”

Michelin Selfseal tires seal 90 percent of tread punctures up to a quarter-inch in diameter, slowing the loss of air pressure to less than 15 pounds per square inch per week, said Billman. Results are based on Michelin internal analytical testing. Actual results may vary, he said.

Explorer is the first SUV in the world to offer Michelin Selfseal tires, which are standard on Explorer Platinum and Explorer Limited Hybrid four-wheel-drive models, and optional on Explorer Limited two-wheel-drive and four-wheel-drive models. Tire size for all models is 255/55R-20. All Explorer models are equipped with a spare tire.

If a nail or screw punctures a Selfseal tire and remains in place, the sealant surrounds the object to help seal the puncture and avoid air loss. If the object punctures the tire and comes back

out, the sealant is designed to fill tread punctures up to a quarter-inch in diameter.

The sealant is designed to enable drivers to continue their journey uninterrupted. If a tread puncture or low pressure is detected, the tire should be inspected and repaired by a qualified tire professional.

Michelin Selfseal tires are designed to help avoid:

- Dangerous side-of-the-road stops
- Lost time
- Loss of vehicle control.

“The all-new Explorer is designed to help our customers feel unstoppable and worry-free,” said Craig Patterson, Explorer marketing manager. “The availability of these new Michelin Selfseal tires is another great example of that.”

Feds Indict a Man Who Sold Cars That Didn’t Exist

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) – Authorities say a former Florida Porsche salesman scammed more than 30 customers out of about \$2.2 million by selling them non-existent cars.

According to law enforcement records, the 44-year-old suspect Shiraaz Sookralli made his initial appearance April 3 in Fort Lauderdale federal court.

He faces a variety of charges, including mail fraud and wire fraud as well as money laundering charges.

A criminal complaint filed in federal court says that Sookralli, who had been a salesman at Champion Porsche in Pompano Beach, Fla., created a shell corporation with a similar name.

Federal investigators say in the indictments that Sookralli then made bogus sales orders for non-existent future exotic Porsche models.

He then took deposits from unsuspecting buyers with his shell company’s bank account.

Champion Porsche, which did not authorize the transactions, contacted victims and cooperated with law enforcement.

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

Location: Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center
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TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 2019
Meeting 1: 7:00 - 7:50 a.m. (breakfast included)
Meeting 2: 11:30 a.m. - 12:20 p.m. (lunch included)

Location: Courtyard by Marriott Detroit Warren
(30190 Van Dyke Ave., Warren, MI 48093)

Visit www.KaydanWealthManagement.com for a complete list of all future meetings and events.

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GM Collison Repair Network Approves New Tech Provider

DriveCRASH, Drew Technologies' collision-focused diagnostic platform, has been officially approved by General Motors for its Collision Repair Network.

GM approved DriveCRASH as a Diagnostic Scan Tool that can provide full OEM coverage, including read/clear diagnostic trouble codes (DTC), data PIDs, Special Functions/Output controls and SPS reprogramming.

DriveCRASH combines Drew Technologies' CarDAQ-Plus 3 J2534 interface with GM's Global Diagnostic Software 2 (GDS2) and Tech2WIN, providing complete OEM coverage for both Global A and non-Global A vehicles, model years 2004 and forward.

"After many years of being a partner with GM in diagnostic services, we are excited to be part of the new GM Collision Repair Network," said Bob Augustine, vice president of Business Development for Drew Technologies/OPUS IVS.

"Performing both Pre and Post

scans using the OEM-validated software is a crucial part of both the estimating and repair verification processes.

"With all the safety system technology now being deployed in the vehicle, ultimately, our goal is to ensure the repair is performed correctly and to the highest safety standards."

DriveCRASH offers a comprehensive scan solution for collision repair shops in a single, ruggedized, Windows 10 tablet.

With no upfront hardware costs, DriveCRASH delivers complete OEM scans and professional remote services, including Remote Assisted Programming (RAP), ADAS calibrations, and brand-specific diagnostic support from a team of OEM-trained technicians – on a pay-per-service basis.

Focused on repairing modern, intelligent vehicle electronics, DriveCRASH provides coverage across Asian, Domestic, and European makes through current model years, Augustine said.



GM uses Drew Technologies' DriveCRASH for Collision Repair Network.

EV Tech Renews Lead Mine

ST. LOUIS (AP) – An old Missouri lead mining site that has been a dormant nuisance for decades may soon get new life, thanks to its vast reserves of a metal vital for use in electric vehicle batteries.

The Environmental Protection Agency on April 3 announced an agreement allowing a division of Missouri Cobalt LLC to implement a cleanup plan at the Madison County Mines site near Fredericktown. It will remain on the Superfund list, but the cleanup allows reuse for cobalt mining.

It isn't clear how long the cleanup will take or when mining will resume. Missouri Cobalt CEO Michael Hollomon declined comment. Lead was mined at the site for decades until the early 1960s. Remaining waste resulted in the Superfund designation in 2003.

Lead contamination can cause learning disabilities and other problems for children. Blood testing in the 1990s found that up to 15 percent of children living near the old mining site had elevated levels of lead in their blood. The EPA said recent test-

ing has shown a significant drop in blood-lead levels, but offered no data. Messages seeking comment from state and Madison County health officials were not immediately returned to AP.

Missouri Cobalt's website said it purchased the old mine site in 2018 to tap into the demand for cobalt used in high-performance batteries for electric vehicles made by Tesla, BMW and other companies.

The company believes that while the lead is long gone from the mine, it has the largest reserve of cobalt in North America, estimated at 35 million pounds (16 million kilograms).

Missouri Cobalt said the renewed mining operation will create an estimated 250 permanent jobs. The environmental remediation effort is expected to require an additional 50 workers.

EPA Region 7 Administrator Jim Gulliford said in a statement that efforts to mitigate and reopen the mine "demonstrate how economic and environmental revitalization go hand-in-hand."

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Ghosn Arrested by Japanese Police – Again

TOKYO (AP) – Tokyo prosecutors arrested Nissan’s former chairman Carlos Ghosn on April 4 for a fourth time on fresh allegations that cut short his brief time outside detention.

Ghosn was taken from his apartment in Tokyo early in the morning to the prosecutors’ office and then sent to the Tokyo Detention Center, the same facility where he spent more than three months following his arrest in November. He had been released on bail just a month earlier.

It’s unclear how long Ghosn may be detained under the latest arrest.

“My arrest this morning is outrageous and arbitrary,” Ghosn said in a statement issued last week. “It is part of another attempt by some individuals at Nissan to silence me by misleading the prosecutors. Why arrest me except to try to break me? I will not be broken. I am innocent of the groundless charges and accusations against me.”

Prosecutors defended the move, saying the latest allegations are a new case requiring precautions to prevent Ghosn from destroying evidence. They allege \$5 million in funds sent by a Nissan subsidiary to an overseas dealership were diverted to a company controlled by Ghosn.

“We now have a totally different case, and we are only doing what we think is right,” Shin Kukimoto, deputy chief prosecutor at the Tokyo District Prosecutor’s Office, told reporters.

“As a result of our investigation, we have a new case in which he must be detained, and we have appropriately obtained an arrest warrant from the court,” he said.

Ghosn, 65, was first arrested on Nov. 19 on charges of under-reporting his compensation. He

was rearrested twice in December. The multiple arrests prolong detentions without trial and are an oft-criticized prosecution tactic in Japan’s criminal justice system.

The allegations in the most recent arrest cover three money transfers from 2015 through last year, according to the prosecutors.

Kukimoto said the new allegation of breach of trust is different from an earlier charge made in January. The companies where the money was transferred to, the motives, and the alleged scheme are all different, he said. He refused to identify the three companies allegedly involved but said one company was in effect owned by Ghosn.

Unlike an earlier case, in which Ghosn caused damage to Nissan to benefit himself and a business partner, this time it was merely “for his own personal benefit,” Kukimoto said.

French prosecutors also are investigating Ghosn’s financial activities at Nissan’s French alliance partner Renault SA, where he was chairman and CEO until his arrest. Ghosn is one of France’s most famous executives, and each development in his legal saga is closely watched by the French government, a key Renault shareholder.

A statement from the Japanese prosecutors’ did not mention Oman, but the new allegation appears related to an investigation by Renault into payments to a major dealership in the Middle Eastern country, some of which are suspected of having been channeled for Ghosn’s personal use. Renault said April 3 that it had turned over information about those payments to French prosecutors.

Ghosn predicted a new arrest in a French television interview conducted hours before the prosecutors appeared at his apartment. He told broadcaster

TF1 that he had never been “above the law,” but acknowledged that he “pushed things to the limit” to improve Nissan and Renault. The interview was filmed April 3 but aired April 4.

Prosecutors also seized the passport of his wife Carole along with her computer and cell-phone, including sensitive exchanges with attorneys, the family’s French lawyer told The Associated Press in Paris. Japanese prosecutors would not comment when asked why the wife was targeted.

“My arrest this morning is outrageous and arbitrary.”

– Carlos Ghosn

Ghosn was an auto industry star, having transformed Nissan over two decades from near bankruptcy into one of the largest automaking alliances in the world.

Nissan, a co-defendant on the charges of under-reporting compensation, declined comment on the criminal proceedings.

However, company spokesman Nicholas Maxfield said in a statement that “Nissan’s internal investigation has uncovered substantial evidence of blatantly unethical conduct.”

The maker of the March subcompact, Leaf electric car and Infiniti luxury models will hold a shareholders’ meeting in mid-April to oust Ghosn from its board.

The maximum penalty upon conviction on charges of under-reporting compensation and breach of trust is 15 years in prison. It is unclear when Ghosn’s trial may begin. Preparations for trials in Japan routinely take months.

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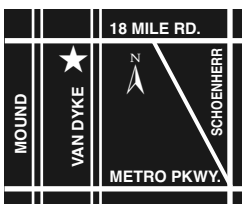
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Distracted Driving Remains Problem, According to AAA

Your eyes are on the road and your hands are on the wheel, but are you still distracted?

Research from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that potentially unsafe mental distractions can persist for as long as 27 seconds after drivers use voice-based technology to dial, change music or send a text message, said AAA Foundation spokeswoman Adrienne Woodland.

At 25 mph, drivers travel the length of nearly three football fields during this time. AAA urges drivers to put down their phone and avoid distractions when behind the wheel, especially now during April’s Distracted Driving Awareness Month.

“Most drivers believe that if their eyes are on the road and their hands are on the wheel, then they are focused on the drive,” said Woodland. “But research proves that there are hidden dangers when using a cell phone or in-vehicle technology. Mental distractions last longer than you think and can cause a dangerous crash.”

According to a recent AAA Consumer Pulse study, almost half of Michigan drivers (44 percent) personally feel it is very dangerous for someone to talk on a hand-held phone while driving.

Despite this, more than half of those surveyed (58 percent) admitted to recently talking on a cell phone while driving.

AAA is committed to helping drivers curb the urge to engage in distracting behaviors behind

the wheel. Any task that requires taking your eyes or attention off the road and hands off the wheel can present a dangerous risk on the roadway.

That includes changing the radio, programming navigation or even enjoying a sandwich. It’s important to put aside electronic distractions and never use text messaging, email, video games or internet functions, including those built into the vehicle, while driving.

The frightening stats show that between 2012 and 2017, nearly 20,000 people nationwide died in crashes involving a distracted driver, and these numbers are underreported, Woodland said.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), there were 3,166 people killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2017.

While this reflects a 9 percent decrease from 2016 to 2017, there is still much work to be done, Woodland said. In the last six years, 9.5 percent of all fatal crashes involved a distracted driver.

As part of National Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April, AAA – The Auto Club Group and the Auto Club Group Traffic Safety Foundation are partnering with The Hertz Corporation on a campaign that encourages motorists to evaluate their driving habits and take a pledge to stay focused on the road, avoid cell phone use and minimize distractions.



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