

## Chrysler Museum Opens Annual Holiday Exhibit

The Walter P. Chrysler Museum, in Auburn Hills, will be at its festive best this holiday season with its sixth annual Cars, Trees & Traditions (CTT) exhibition, Nov. 20 - Dec. 30. The exhibit is spruced up for 2010 with 18 vintage model trains.

Cars, Trees & Traditions spotlights eight decades of holiday season celebrations through 23 decorated trees paired with Chrysler vehicles throughout the Museum. Evergreens on the Museum's two top floors feature authentic ornamentation from the early 1900s through the 1980s, while those in Boss Chrysler's Garage are embellished by theme.

Meanwhile, the Nov. 19 opening reception was an evening of good cheer during which the public was able to preview CTT and get into the holiday spirit with:

- Hearty hors d'oeuvre stations by Forte Belanger, spotlighting such Christmas symbols and traditions as the legend of apples; the tradition of garlic, mushrooms and pineap-

ples and the symbolism of peanuts and wheat

- A wine tasting presented by BellaVino Fine Wine & Spirits, featuring 20 varieties available for purchase by the bottle

- A selection of wine-inspired original art from the studios of Thomas Arvid demonstrations of select vintage trains from 18 sets on exhibit from the private collection of John Loeding

- capella performances of Christmas carols and popular classics by the Great Lakes Chorus of Sweet Adelines International

- a visit from St. Nick
- a silent auction of holiday décor and cheer benefiting local school children and 20 percent discounts on collectibles and souvenirs from the Museum's gift shop w/complimentary gift wrapping

Meanwhile, new for 2010 are those Vintage Trains.

Cars, Trees & Traditions illustrates styles, events and products of holidays past through advertisements, graphics and

images accompanying each tree, including a variety of historic photos of Detroit from the archives of Wayne State University's Walter P. Reuther Library.

Following the exhibition's narrative from one vignette to the next, guests see how vehicle progression - from horseless carriages to enclosed, more comfortable and better engineered models - helped change the ways in which Americans celebrated the season's festivities.

Vintage trains will enhance the décor of 18 CTT vignettes. The authentic, primarily O-gauge sets are from the private collection of John Loeding of Lapeer, Mich.

Spanning from 1911 through the late 1980s/early 1990s, the beautifully-preserved models include an Ives Steamer Passenger, a 1920s American Flyer Electric Passenger, a 1930s Lionel Steamer Freight, a 1947 Lionel Turbine, a 1950s Marx and a 1961 Lionel Military and Space sets.

Loeding will also display

later model Lionel Spirit of 76 and Great Lakes Express trains, as well as Polar Express and Thomas the Tank Engine sets for the youngest CTT visitors.

Cars, Trees & Traditions will be open for self-guided tours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday - Saturday and noon - 5 p.m. Sunday. The Museum is closed every Monday, as well as Nov. 25 and 26 and Dec. 24 and 25.

General Museum admission, which includes Cars, Trees & Traditions, is \$8 for adults, \$7 for seniors (62 and older) and \$4 for juniors (6 - 12). Children 5 years old and younger are free. Admission is \$4 per person for groups of 15 or more with advance registration.

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The Chrysler 200, left, and Town & Country minivan are among the many Chrysler Brand vehicles that are receiving major makeovers for 2011 in the next few months.

## 2012 LaCrosse's New Braking System Expected to Improve Mileage by 25%

By Christine Snyder  
Staff Reporter

The frequent braking of city driving has long been the culprit of poor gas mileage.

The 2012 Buick LaCrosse will turn that braking into improved fuel economy with its new technology, eAssist, which will be the model's standard powertrain system.

The eAssist system includes a small lithium-ion battery and electric motor generator to enable regenerative braking capability.

This is expected to improve LaCrosse's fuel economy by an estimated 25 percent.

Steve Poulos, global chief engineer for the eAssist system, said eAssist bridges the gap between the traditional internal combustion engine and heavy electrification of vehicles.

"We are seeing heavy electrification of vehicles, from hybrids to extended range to fuel cells in the future," said Poulos at a recent media preview at the GM Tech Center. "Those are high content systems. They deliver a lot and they cost a lot."

Poulos continued that while GM is definitely "going down that road," the traditional internal combustion engine is going to be with us for a while.

Poulos said the eAssist system gives light electric regenerative braking that works in conjunction with the tradi-



The 2012 Buick LaCrosse dashboard will look a little different as it will display the battery power activity of the car's standard eAssist system.

tional engine.

How it works: When the driver brakes at a red light or traffic, the gas engine turns off while the electrical system keeps the heat, lights, air conditioning or other systems on. When the driver's foot comes off the brake, the engine restarts automatically.

Poulos said the driver should feel very little difference operating the vehicle, though the efficiency gauge graphics will let you know when you are changing power.

There are four core elements to the system: A slightly modified engine, a generator, a power pack, and a six-speed transmission.

The battery pack is 2 cubic feet and fits in the back of the trunk.

"An enormous amount of work was done integrating it just to make the vehicle experience very pleasing and ap-

propriate for a LaCrosse," said Poulos.

The 2012 Buick LaCrosse is the first vehicle with eAssist, he said, but it won't be the last.

"This is the base powertrain of the future," said the eAssist system's chief engineer.

## GM Fires on All Cylinders as It Launches Stock Sale

By Gerald Scott  
Staff Reporter

How about that General Motors?

Last week, the General was the center of attention of not just the auto industry, but of the national economy as well as it completed a major business transaction to set it on a firmer post-bankruptcy path.

In New York, GM executives met at the New York Stock Exchange - with GM cars parked out front, to celebrate its initial public offering as a success.

In Warren, GM Vice Chairman Tom Stephens held a trophy aloft at the wind tunnel on the Tech Center campus as Motor Trend named the much-anticipated Chevrolet Volt its Car of the Year.

In Los Angeles, GM effectively "owned" the L.A. Auto Show as both the Chevrolet Volt and Chevrolet Camaro convertible turned heads. The Volt was named - surprise! - Green Car of the Year by *Green Car Journal* at a West Coast show that traditionally turned its nose up to most of Detroit's offerings.

All of which had new GM CEO Dan Akerson beside himself with joy at this dramatic turn of events in GM's favor.

"I couldn't be more pleased to spend a couple minutes with you on this very, very special day," Akerson said on Nov. 18 during a conference phone call with auto writers.

"A great day for everyone with a stake in GM: employees, retirees, dealers, suppliers, taxpayers and yes - new shareholders.

"Let me start by thanking everyone involved in this Herculean effort. Going public, an important milestone on our way to being a new and different and better GM - the market is showing a lot of enthusiasm for good reason - we have a lot going for us right now.

"It starts with designing, building and selling the world's best vehicles. No better example than the Chevy Volt, which has won three prestigious awards just this week including *Motor Trend*

Car of the Year."

(The other awards were the aforementioned Green Car of the Year as well as a similar Car of the Year nod from *Automobile* magazine).

Besides a ton of positive publicity - something GM really hasn't seen since the 2009 bankruptcy - perhaps the best outcome from last week's GM news is the gradual exit of the U.S. government from inside of GM's operations, thanks to the original TARP fund bridge loans that saved GM two years ago.

The U.S. Department of Treasury announced last week that it had agreed to sell 358,546,795 shares of its common stock at \$33 per share, all as part of GM's larger IPO.

After this offering, Treasury's ownership of GM's outstanding shares of common stock will decline by nearly half - from 60.8 percent to 36.9 percent (or 33.3 percent if the underwriters exercise their overallotment option in full).

"GM's initial public offering is an important step in the turnaround of the company and for our work to recover taxpayer dollars and exit this investment as soon as practicable," said Treasury Secretary Tim Geitner in a statement from Washington, D.C.

"It is now widely recognized that the taxpayers' investment not only helped save jobs during the worst economic crisis in a generation, but also gave the auto industry a solid foundation on which to build."

Indeed, the news of GM's successful IPO comes within a month and quarter when car sales are somewhat on the uptick, the national economy seems to be reviving and with the warm reception for the Volt, there is great hope for GM's future, especially, going into 2011.

In spite of all the excitement surrounding GM's return to public stock trading, Akerson was supplicant in his long view of where the company is now going.

"There's a lot of optimism and confidence in GM these

Brand and its vehicles will deliver what people deserve, not just what they expect. It will take appointments - design, technology, and engines, to name a few - that were borne for a few and deliver them to the masses."

The automaker is replacing its full lineup with either all-new or significantly improved vehicles in just the next few months.

As a sign of that change, the recently introduced all-new Chrysler winged badge logo will adorn all this new metal as it rolls out to the public.

"What Chrysler Brand will be, and what will make it unique, is that it will give people beautiful shapes, which would otherwise be out of reach. It will always deliver a bit more than the customer expects," said Olivier Francois, Chrysler Brand president & CEO.

"At every turn, Chrysler

200C show car revealed in recent years on the auto show circuit, this vehicle will now compete head-to-head with the best of the mid-size segment. A convertible version will follow.

Virtually every system in the sedan is new or upgraded for 2011, giving the Chrysler 200 its own identity and space in the highly competitive mid-size sedan segment.

Exterior and sheet metal upgrades include: front and rear fascias and fenders, a new grille featuring the new Chrysler brand winged badge, new hood, LED positioning light pipe in front headlamps, rear deck lid and exterior mirrors, new projector headlamps and fog lamps, new LED taillamps and an LED center high-mounted stoplight.



GM CEO Dan Akerson led the automaker's team at the "ringing of the opening bell" at the New York Stock Exchange as GM celebrated its initial public offering as a success.

days - but there's something else, too," Akerson said.

"We know how we arrived here. We know what went wrong and I believe we've learned a lot from that.

"We know who stood by us in our most difficult time: the employees, and the resilience they showed was magnificent. Customers, dealers and suppliers, and most important, the taxpayers of the United States and Canada.

"We'll never forget that support. We come to work everyday determined to make GM a company that everyone can be proud of."

Indeed, auto writers and analysts have said, "national IPO buzz" aside, perhaps

what's also most right about GM these days is that the company has rather effectively put its products back in the spotlight - rather than the palace intrigue generated from the RenCen executive suites, as has been the case over the past three years.

After the dust from the IPO clears, GM's next big event will be the scheduled public launch of the Chevrolet Volt at dealerships in December. It will ride the tailwind from that launch into the 2011 Detroit auto show, where more accolades for GM's cars and trucks, led by the Volt, figure to help reinvigorate the entire auto industry going into the new calendar year.

## Advance Auto Says Its Net Income Rises in 3Q

ROANOKE, Va. (AP) - Auto parts seller Advance Auto Parts says its third-quarter net income rose 41 percent as it added stores and improved the availability and pricing of parts.

The Roanoke-based company said late Wednesday that it earned \$87.6 million in the June-to-September period. That's up from \$61.9 million in the same period a year ago.

Advance Auto Parts says revenue rose 11.4 percent to \$1.4 billion.

The company has seen a net addition of 122 new stores over the past 12 months, but sales also rose in established locations. Same-store sales

were up 9.9 percent in the third quarter, compared to a 4.7 percent gain in the year-ago quarter.

Advance Auto Parts has been able to grow its business and capitalize on "strong industry fundamentals and consumer demand for auto parts," CEO Darren R. Jackson said in a news release.

The company also raised its full-year earnings forecast to \$3.80 to \$3.90 per share, from the \$3.70 to \$3.80 it announced previously.

Advance Auto Parts has about 51,000 employees and operates 3,540 stores in 39 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

## U.S. Behind in Reducing Overall Auto Fatalities

By JOAN LOWY  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) - The United States is lagging behind nearly every other high-income country in reducing annual traffic fatalities, said a report released last week by a U.S. government research panel.

There's some good news: U.S. traffic fatalities fell 9.7 percent in 2009 to 33,808, the lowest number since 1950. In 2008, an estimated 37,423 people died on the highways, a decline of 9.3 percent from the previous year.

But dramatic declines in traffic fatalities in the U.S. over the last several years are likely due to a sour economy in which people drive less, rather than lasting changes in behavior, the report suggests. As the economy improves, researchers said, fatalities are likely to rebound.

"The experience of the past three years is not grounds for concluding that sustainable progress has been made on traffic safety," the report said.

In the 1970s, the U.S. fatality rate was the lowest in the world. But because safety efforts have improved more slowly in the United States than elsewhere, most high-income countries have now matched or gone below the U.S. rate, said the report by the Transportation Research Board.

Countries with comparable

living standards where fatality rates per mile (kilometer) of travel were substantially higher than in the United States 15 years ago are now below the U.S. rate, including Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Finland, Norway, France and Britain.

"The United States can no longer claim to rank highly in road safety by world standards," the report said.

From 1995 to 2009, fatalities dropped 52 percent in France, 38 percent in Britain, 25 percent in Australia, and 50 percent in 15 high-income countries for which long-term fatality and traffic data are available, the report said. But they dropped only 19 percent in the U.S.

The dramatic declines in fatalities in other nations have been achieved in part through the kinds of programs that have sometimes generated opposition in the U.S.: speed cameras and speed measuring devices, sobriety checkpoints and mandatory motorcycle helmets, for example.

If such programs were widely adopted in the U.S., it's probable that thousands of lives could be saved each year, the report said.

Researchers estimated that nationwide, sustained and frequent use of checkpoints to detect drunk drivers could save 1,500 to 3,000 lives annually.