

'Green Hornet' Car Bursts into Movie and Museum

by Stefanie Carano
Staff Reporter
Detroit Auto Scene

Movie car fanatics looking to escape the winter blues can visit the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles where Black Beauty – the signature beast car from the new movie by Sony Pictures, "The Green Hornet" – is on display now through the end of February.

The vehicle is based on a 1966 Chrysler Imperial, customized with machine guns, rocket launchers and other items to give main character Britt Reid, a newspaper publisher who midnights as The Green Hornet, a personalized crime-fighting vehicle.

Black Beauty rests atop a 30-foot platform outside Petersen Automotive Museum, where prior displays included the 2000 NASCAR Dodge Intrepid and the AM/PM Boss monster truck.

"It's one of 29 cars featured in the movie. It's the 'hero car,' which means it's presented as it would've been in its best condition," said Chris



PHOTO: PETERSEN AUTOMOTIVE MUSEUM

Black Beauty, from the movie, "The Green Hornet," on display at the Petersen Automotive Museum in LA. It's a Chrysler Imperial.

Brown, museum information and marketing manager.

Later this month, the museum will feature several variations of the car as it was used in the movie.

"So people can see what it takes to represent one car in the movie," Brown said. "They have certain needs for the movie, the car jumps over something, they build a car specifically for the jump. They drill holes in the car and cover it with explosive material, put paint over it and hit a series of buttons and little explosions go off that make it

look like it's coming from the outside rather than the inside. The car is shot up in different ways."

Members of the public will be able to see the car as it was filmed when "The Green Hornet" comes to theaters Jan. 14.

In addition to the movie version of the car, the museum has one of two of the original Black Beauty vehicles built for the mid-60s television series.

The Petersen Automotive Museum has more than 350 cars on permanent display in



Black Beauty, from the new movie, "The Green Hornet," will be on display now until February at the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles.

its collection, which includes a Hollywood gallery with cars that have been featured in movies and on television. Vehicles include the 1963 Volkswagen Beetle from the movie, "Herbie Fully Loaded," and the 1965 Hannibal 8 from "The Great Race."

GM Making Progress, Working for More – VP Hresko

by Stefanie Carano
Staff Reporter
Detroit Auto Scene

General Motors is headed in the right direction, improving its quality and expanding into emerging markets, according to GM vice president of powertrain engineering James Hresko.

Hresko was keynote speaker at a recent meeting of the Asian Indian Affinity Group held at Stevenson High School in Sterling Heights last week, who talked about efforts being made on behalf of the company to improve its standing with consumers and investors.

"This year has been a milestone for us, obviously because of the bad things that have happened at General Motors over the past couple of years, but this year we're starting to gain a little momentum," Hresko said.

"We have a long way to go but we're moving in the right direction due to the work that this particular group of employees has contributed to."

Hresko said some of the things the company is working on that would be significant enablers for them are long-term, lasting relation-

ships with suppliers.

"We haven't done that in the past, we haven't had the best of relationships," he said. "So, sharing the good news of growth, profitably, quality, will be a strategy there."

"We continue to form four-star relationships with the unions. Regardless of what you hear on the outside, we've made a lot of progress here and we'll continue to do that and then I think most importantly, our relationships – how we treat our customers and how we interface with the people who buy our product – needs to continue to improve."

"I've personally spent a lot of time on that over the past couple of years and while it's not perfect, we are moving in the right direction."

Hresko said one of the reasons GM got into the situation they're in is because of their quality reputation and that the company is working to change that.

"Back three years ago, we averaged around \$160 of cost per vehicle, on average, that we sold across the globe," he said.

"We've cut a substantial amount across the bottom line because we've reduced

our warranty (costs) by about 50 percent over the past couple of years. That's substantial, our warranty really needs to be zero but we're fundamentally moving in the right direction."

He said in this year's *Consumer Reports* Reliability Study, the company had 19 models that were above industry average.

"Not where we need to be – we need to have all of them in there," he said.

He said that in total models recommended in the *Consumer Reports* study, GM is in second place, which he said is not nearly good enough.

"We used to have double the models. We don't have that any more, but nonetheless, we need to be the company that has the most recommended buys and if our warranty trend continues to come down like it was, we think we're going to be moving farther to the good next year," he said.

Moving forward, he said, the company will work on answering the call for improved reduction in the requirement for petroleum in the U.S. in all the countries where it sells vehicles and to improve fuel economy.

And, he said, as time goes on, GM will work to transform its products into a new-looking product portfolio that helps them meet long-term emission, greenhouse gas requirements and fuel economy requirements through improvements in internal combustion engine technology, transmission technology, hybrid-electric vehicles, battery-electric vehicles as well as hydrogen fuel cell technology.

Hresko said India is one of the markets GM pays close attention to, mentioning that auto production is now on the north side of 2 million units and growing extremely fast. He said the Indian market is one the company expects will emulate somewhat the China market.

"We have a multitude of plant locations and, as the market grows and we grow our engineering capability in India, we'll continue to provide the technology and the kind of products we'll need to grow our business there. It is one of our core key competencies and strategies as we move forward through our business in India," he said.

Ford Names New Leader Of Investor Relations

DEARBORN – Ford Motor Company last week named K.R. Kent, currently chief financial officer, Ford Motor Credit Company, to the newly created position of executive director, Investor Relations.

Kent, 48, will lead Ford's effort to further strengthen the investor relations function and significantly deepen Ford and Ford Credit's engagement with the investment community in both the equity and fixed income arenas.

Note that Kent will report to Ford Vice President and Treasurer Neil Schloss. The new appointment is effective Jan. 1.

"K.R. brings to this new position a deep knowledge of Ford, Ford Credit, the automotive and credit industries, and the global investment community," said Ford Executive Vice President and CFO Lewis Booth.

"As we continue to make progress on our One Ford plan and move toward an investment grade credit rating, we are committed to providing the investment community with authoritative and highly credible insight into our automotive business and Ford Credit."

Kent, who holds a bachelor's degree in business analysis from Indiana University and a master's degree in finance from Ohio State University, joined Ford in 1987. Throughout his career, he has

held a variety of finance positions, including controller, Product Development, Ford of Europe and assistant treasurer, Ford Motor Company.

Ford also announced today that Michael Seneski will replace Kent as CFO, Ford Credit.

Seneski, 45, is currently controller, Global and U.S. Marketing and Sales. He will report to Mike Bannister, chairman and CEO, Ford Credit, and his appointment is effective Jan. 1.

"We are pleased to have a finance professional of Michael's caliber as CFO of Ford Credit as we continue our mission of providing financing support for Ford customers and dealers around the world," Bannister said.

"Michael's knowledge of Ford Credit and Treasury will be an asset as we continue to ensure that Ford Credit remains a competitive advantage for Ford Motor Company going forward."

Seneski joined Ford in 1989. He has held numerous key finance positions in North America and Asia-Pacific, including vice president and controller, Ford Credit North America, and assistant treasurer, Ford Motor Company. Seneski holds a bachelor's degree in finance from Michigan State University and a master's degree in finance from the University of California-Berkeley.

GM Offers New Buyouts To 2,000 Skilled Trades

By DEE-ANN DURBIN
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) – General Motors Co. is offering buyouts to several thousand skilled trades workers at 14 plants around the U.S.

The company estimates it has 2,000 more skilled trades workers than it needs right now. Skilled trades workers do jobs that need special training, like electrical work and welding.

The buyouts come following the automaker's announcement last month that it plans to hire 1,000 engineers and researchers over the next two years as it adds staff to work on the next generation of electric vehicles.

For the skilled trades workers, the company will pay eligible employees \$60,000 to retire with full benefits. Younger workers will have the option to take the \$60,000 in exchange for giving up retiree health care and other benefits.

GM spokesman Chris Lee didn't know how many workers will get the offers.

Eligible workers will be notified by Dec. 23 and will have to leave the company by March 1.

Nine of the eligible plants have closed or are scheduled to close, which would put

those workers on a temporary layoff from GM but would give them the right to transfer to other openings in the company.

Those are assembly plants in Wilmington, Del., Shreveport, La., Doraville, Ga., and Pontiac, Mich.; metal stamping plants in Grand Rapids, Mich., and Mansfield, Ohio; and engine and transmission plants in Flint, Livonia and Ypsilanti Township.

The other eligible plants include Spring Hill (Tenn.) Manufacturing and Janesville (Wis.) Assembly, which have been closed but could reopen if GM needs them. Offers are also being handed out at three open Michigan plants: Grand Blanc Weld Tool Center, Orion Assembly and Pontiac Stamping.

GM has frequently used buyouts to trim its work force as it tried to match output to its falling U.S. market share. Around 66,000 U.S. factory workers have taken buyouts or early retirement offers since 2006.

The last buyout GM offered was in the summer of 2009, right after it emerged from bankruptcy protection. Six thousand workers took that offer. GM now has around 53,000 hourly production workers in the U.S.

Michigan Secretary of State OKs O/E Learning for Safety Program

Are you a driver with a good record but suddenly received a ticket that will give you some points and possibly increase your insurance costs?

If you are in that category – and there are reportedly tens of thousands of Michigan drivers who fit that profile – O/E Learning, a Troy vendor and one the nation's premier training providers, can help you avoid future points from your record and potentially eliminate higher insurance rates resulting from a driving violation.

That's all because O/E Learning has been approved by the Michigan Secretary of State's office to conduct the online Basic Driver Improvement Course (BDIC), which, most importantly, is designed to make the roads and highways safer, while avoiding additional points for drivers. Under the program, insurance companies are not notified of the driving violation or ticket.

New legislation (Public Act 568), which goes into effect Dec. 31, 2010, provides drivers the option of taking the BDIC course online, which is administered by O/E Learning. The Secretary of State

will notify drivers who are eligible for the program.

After a ticket is issued for a driving violation, the eligible driver will have 60 days to complete the course and pass the examination. The online course takes about three hours to complete.

"This new law provides drivers with a very unique opportunity," said Brian Makowski, O/E President. "Not only will they be safer drivers but they will be able to avoid additional points on their driving record."

Makowski added that studies indicate that drivers who did not take the online course were 10 times more likely to have an accident or receive another ticket and eight times more likely to be arrested for a moving violation or traffic offense compared with those who passed the BDIC.

The studies also found that more than 70 percent of drivers who participated in the program had no collisions in a nine-year period.

Since 1984, O/E Learning has been assisting large corporations and non-profits with their various training and internal communications programs and needs.

Mobile Library of Congress Exhibit Visits School

by Gerald Scott
Editor
U.S. Auto Scene

Some important national history rolled into Macomb County last week as the Library of Congress' mobile exhibit entitled "Gateway to Knowledge" visited a local middle school for two days.

L'Anse Creuse Middle School North in Macomb, near Groesbeck and Hall Road, hosted the traveling tour.

There at the exhibit, field managers Abigail and Josh Van Gelder talked about the traveling tour of the "Gateway to Knowledge" trailer.

"We launched this exhibit on Sept. 25 at the National Book Festival (in Washington, D.C.) and we've been on the road ever since," Abigail said.

"We ended up in Macomb County for a couple of reasons – one is that this trailer was actually built in Michigan."

"Mobility Resource Associates, MRA, a Michigan-based company (in St. Clair Shores), we're really thrilled to have it up in Michigan for one of our last shows of the year – we'll be re-launching again in the spring of the new year."

MRA's corporate office is in St. Clair Shores and its shop is in Taylor, so the trailer was built in Taylor. It is pulled by a Volvo tractor, one that uses biofuel.

"It's exciting for us to kind of bring it home and share it with students in the area."

The traveling exhibit brings high-quality facsimiles of many of the Library's top treasures and information about the millions of resources in the Library's unparalleled collections to small towns and rural communities across America – areas that may not be aware of their ac-



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

The mobile Library of Congress touring exhibit stopped in Macomb County last week.

cess to wealth and information in this publicly funded institution.

The exhibition further outlines the history of the Library, including Thomas Jefferson's role in re-establishing the Library, when he provided his personal book collection to the nation after the burning of the U.S. Capitol in 1814. Jefferson's organization of his books by categories of "Memory, Reason and Imagination" also forms the organization of the materials presented.

Keynote facsimiles on display include the 1507 Waldseemüller Map – the first document to use the word "America" on it – as well as the 1455 Gutenberg Bible, the rough draft of the Declaration of Independence, written in Thomas Jefferson's own hand with edits by no less than Ben Franklin and John Adams, and the 1962 drawings for the comic book that introduced "Spider-Man" to the world.

"There are more than 145 million items in the Library of Congress – we say items be-



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

Abigail and Josh Van Gelder, field managers for MRA in St. Clair Shores, staff the national touring Library of Congress mobile exhibit. The traveling display visited a Macomb County school.

cause it is: books, magazines, newspapers, photographs, movies and videos, everything, because the Copyright Office is part of the Library of Congress – all those items

submitted for Copyright become part of the collection," Abigail Van Gelder said.

"That's what makes it exciting – it's a crazy, vast collection, it's wonderful."