

# U.S. Auto Scene

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## GM, Chrysler Salaried Workers to Get Bonuses

By TOM KRISHER  
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Most of the 26,000 white-collar workers at General Motors Co. will get performance bonuses of 4 to 16 percent of their base salaries this year, but payments to a small number could be 50 percent or more, the company confirmed late last week.

Chrysler Group LLC also will give bonuses to white-collar workers, with payments expected on Friday. Both companies needed government bailouts in 2008 and 2009 to stay in business and make it through bankruptcy protection.

GM said in a statement that the bonuses would be based

on each employee's performance as well as the company's. The statement did not say how much on average each worker would get. Messages were left by The Associated Press for a company spokeswoman late last week.

Chrysler spokesman Gualberto Ranieri would not comment on the matter. Bloomberg News reported last week that the bonuses would average \$10,000 for 10,755 salaried workers, but some who aren't covered by government pay restrictions could get up to half their salary.

"Details regarding salaried performance awards are considered confidential employment records," Ranieri said.

Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne has said the workers

deserve bonuses even though the company lost money because of work they did in re-vamping or redesigning 16 models since the 2009 bankruptcy.

For both companies, the bonuses come less than two years after they needed government bailouts to survive through bankruptcy protection. GM received a \$49.5 billion bailout, while Chrysler got \$12.5 billion.

Both companies have performed far better financially than they did before bankruptcy. GM made \$4.2 billion in the first three quarters of the year and is expected to post a fourth-quarter profit in the coming weeks. Chrysler lost \$652 million last year but is predicting a net profit this year.

The bonus checks at both companies could draw the ire of the United Auto Workers union because they will be much larger for many white-collar workers than checks

that are going to hourly employees.

At GM, hourly workers are expected to get around \$3,200 each, about 5 percent of their base pay, while they'll get \$750 at Chrysler, about 1.2 percent of their base pay.

GM said in its statement that more than 96 percent of the salaried workers will get bonuses of 4 to 16 percent of their base pay. Fewer than 1 percent, the company said, will get 50 percent or more. Bonus sizes grow depending on a worker's level of responsibility.

GM said its top 100 earners are still covered under government pay restrictions imposed on companies that received government aid. Chrysler's top earners also are affected, but a number was not available Thursday night.

Cash salaries have been capped at \$500,000, but further compensation can be made in stock. Many of the executives still will take home more than \$1 million.

## '12 Dodge Charger SRT8 Offers Larger Power Band

The Dodge brand announced last week at the Chicago Auto Show that the Dodge Charger SRT8 will return for the 2012 model year.

"We're continuing the fast-paced rebuilding of Dodge as our performance brand, and the expansion of our SRT product lineup in 2012 is an important part of our rejuvenation," said Ralph Gilles, President and CEO, Dodge Brand — Chrysler Group LLC.

"The new 2012 Dodge Charger SRT8 builds on the iconic four-door fastback coupe design of the all-new Charger and adds a much larger power band across the rpm range, along with intelligent performance attributes and safety and creature comforts for customers who are passionate about performance driving."

The 2012 Dodge Charger SRT8 will be built at the Brampton Assembly plant in Brampton, Ontario, Canada, and will be in dealer showrooms later this year.

Under the hood, the new 6.4-liter HEMI V8 delivers more horsepower and torque than the 6.1-liter HEMI V8 it replaces. It also will offer improved fuel economy.

Estimated power ratings for the 2012 Dodge Charger SRT8 are 465 horsepower and 465 lb.-ft. of torque, including an estimated additional 80 lb.-ft. of torque at 2,900 rpm. Specific horsepower, torque and fuel economy numbers will be announced closer to the vehicle introduction.

Building upon the standard Fuel Saver technology (four-cylinder mode) found in the new 6.4 HEMI V8, a new-for-2012 active valve exhaust system allows the technology to engage over a wider rpm range, which delivers improved fuel efficiency or the use of all eight cylinders when the power is needed.

An active intake manifold and high-lift camshaft with cam phasing provides maximum low-end torque for impressive standing starts while optimizing high-end power.

For the first time in any Chrysler Group LLC SRT product, standard paddle-shift technology joins the standard AutoStick on the floor shifter. Both are mated to the proven W5A580 five-speed automatic transmission, allowing a choice of spirited shifting on

the road and the racetrack.

Both shifting methods give the driver the ability to shift while the transmission controller calibration prevents situations that might over-rev the engine. Chrysler says fully adaptive electronic control of all shifting makes the powertrain more responsive while minimizing harshness.

New for 2012, the Dodge Charger SRT8 features an adaptive damping suspension that uses a wide range of on-road and driver inputs, such as vehicle speed, steering angle, steering speed, brake torque, throttle position and lateral acceleration, to automatically tune the suspension for specific conditions. Drivers also can manually choose between "Auto" and "Sport" settings that quickly change the shock damping and harshness characteristics from the ease of everyday commuting to harsher, more challenging driving situations.

The performance SRT-tuned, fully hydraulic steering system also is improved with a new, heavy-duty pump and revised gearing to give drivers more direct feel and on-center response.

New, split five-spoke, 20-inch lightweight forged and polished aluminum wheels with black painted pockets provide great looks, and the available three- or four-season tires make the 2012 Dodge Charger SRT8 easy to handle and fun to drive, say Chrysler officials.

World-class stopping power for the 2012 Dodge Charger SRT8 comes through four-piston Brembo calipers and vented/slotted rotors measuring 14.2 inches up front and 13.8 inches in the rear.

The Charger SRT8's Ready Alert Braking system anticipates situations when the driver may initiate an emergency brake stop and engages the electronic stability control pump to set brake pads against rotors in order to decrease the time required for full brake application.

Exclusive new front and rear fascias, along with a new rear spoiler, distinguish the 2012 Dodge Charger SRT8 with a high-performance look, according to Chrysler.

The front grille, grille surround and Dodge crosshair feature high-gloss black finishes and the SRT badge. A newly

## GM Joins Child Safety Board Related to Injury Prevention

DETROIT — General Motors has joined the advisory board of the Center for Child Injury Prevention Studies (CChIPS) at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Research Institute.

As an initial activity, GM researchers are guiding CChIPS faculty in a study to identify opportunities for improvement of safety belt performance for child occupants.

"Child passenger safety is a priority for GM," said Mike Robinson, GM vice president of Environment, Energy and Safety Policy. "The additional expertise provided by the Center's faculty and members of the advisory board, including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, will supplement GM's ongoing work."

GM researchers are the lead industry mentors for a 10-month study to determine why some children 8-15 years of age experience injuries in vehicle crashes even when wearing a safety belt.

The GM team will work with CChIPS faculty at Children's

Hospital and University of Pennsylvania, as well as other CChIPS members in the vehicle manufacturer, restraint supplier, child seat manufacturer, and insurance industries to compare injury and fatality risks for children using safety belts with those of adults in similar restraints.

"We welcome GM's participation in our consortium and the opportunity to have access to the company's research and development expertise," said Flaura Winston, MD, PhD, and director of the Center for Child Injury Prevention Studies. "The safety belt study will be greatly enhanced by GM's participation and will provide crucial data that will improve industry efforts to make vehicles, and their rear seats in particular, safer for older children."

GM has been a leader in promoting child passenger safety through its partnership with Safe Kids USA. As part of the Safe Kids Buckle Up program, certified child passenger safety technicians have inspected 1.3 million car seats.



Dodge Brand President and CEO Ralph Gilles introduced the 2012 Dodge Charger SRT8 at the Chicago Auto Show recently.

sculpted hood features a 6.4L badge and black air exhauster for added engine cooling.

In the rear, the Charger's new signature "racetrack" tail-lamp design with 164 illuminating LEDs receives new 4-inch round dual exhaust tips and an SRT8 decklid badge to show the Street and Racing Technology DNA.

Unique side-sill cladding is painted to match the body color.

A newly designed underbody belly pan features integrated brake ducting to improve cooling and brake fade performance at all four corners.

Building upon the all-new design from 2011, the interior

environment of the 2012 Dodge Charger SRT8 combines more world-class accommodations with race-inspired technology and appointments.

An all-new, leather-wrapped, SRT-exclusive steering wheel features a unique rim section with a flattened bottom surface that showcases the SRT logo. The standard paddle shifters flank both sides of the new steering wheel behind the new contoured palm rests.

For the high-performance look, carbon-weave, fiber aluminum interior trim pieces are integrated into the new instrument panel and shifter bezel.

## GM Joins ASQ to Gain Access to Quality Resources

by Christine Snyder  
Staff Reporter  
Tech Center News

For a global company like GM, quality is an ongoing concern and one that requires every resource available.

GM has just widened its access to quality-related resources with its membership with ASQ, the world's largest network of quality resources and experts.

At the Global Quality All People meeting at GM Tech Center's Vehicle Engineering Center in Warren, Feb. 15, Dan Nicholson, vice president of GM Global Quality signed an agreement to become an enterprise member of ASQ with Laurel Nelson-Rowe, managing director of ASQ.

Nicholson said joining with ASQ means GM employees across the globe now have access to the best quality practices, resources and experts.

Nicholson emphasized the importance of quality as it relates to the most important aspect of GM's business: the customer.

"We all interact with customers directly or indirectly," said Nicholson, who advised the quality engineers to be mindful of that interaction, to

listen, learn and be responsive.

Nicholson shared some personal experiences he had with customers dissatisfied with the quality of their new vehicles, and how listening to their concerns and responding to them turned a negative experience into a favorable one.

"You just need to reach out and listen," said Nicholson. "I spend a lot of time listening and not talking. It's hard because you want to defend your product."

GM will join 42 other global companies such as General Electric, Hewlett Packard, Boeing and Intel, who are also enterprise members with ASQ.

Enterprise membership not only gives GM access to ASQ's Knowledge Center, which consists of thousands of articles, case studies and best practices, but also to ASQ networking opportunities and certification programs.

ASQ certified engineers earn an average of \$5,000 more annually than non-certified engineers, according to ASQ's annual survey.

GM quality engineers will have the opportunity to work with other global quality engineers worldwide as ASQ mem-



Laurel Nelson-Rowe, ASQ managing director, and Don Nicholson, GM's vice president of Global Quality, seal GM's membership with ASQ at the GM Tech Center in Warren.

bers, said Nelson-Rowe.

"Quality is something we work toward, but the journey is never finished," said Nelson-Rowe. "We begin today a quality journey together."

"GM is now connected with ASQ and we will raise the voice of quality at GM as nev-

er before."

ASQ, a global community of people dedicated to quality, have millions of individual and organizational members in 150 countries. It is headquartered in Milwaukee, and has national service centers in China, India and Mexico.

## CEO Akerson Calls China 'Crown Jewel' in GM Plans

By TINNI TRAN  
Associated Press

BELJING (AP) — China will play a much bigger role in General Motors Co.'s plans including clean energy vehicles as it moves to capitalize further on rapid growth in the world's largest auto market, the company's CEO said last week.

Calling China "the crown jewel in the GM universe," Chief Executive Daniel Akerson said the automaker plans to launch more than 20 new or redesigned cars in China over the next two years.

"China is central to our global strategy," he said at a news conference. "We want to understand the preferences that the China market wants. We bring our best designs,

best technology to China."

GM sold more cars and trucks in China last year than it did in the U.S. for the first time in the company's 102-year history. An expansion of sales into provincial cities helped the company sell 2.35 million vehicles in China in 2010, up 29 percent from the previous year.

China has become important to almost all of the world's vehicle makers, with sales expanding by a third last year to exceed 18 million vehicles while sales of passenger cars also rose by a third, to 13.7 million vehicles.

It has been particularly important as a source of earnings for GM, which has been through a dramatic turnaround since 2009, when it was rescued from collapse by

a \$50 billion government bailout and filed for bankruptcy protection.

"China is a unique market sitting in what I think is probably the highest growth area in the next 10, 20, 30 years in Asia," Akerson said.

GM estimates its market share in China at 14.7 percent and expects it to increase. The automaker's sales in January hit a monthly record high of 268,071 vehicles — up 22.3 percent from a year earlier.

Akerson, who was appointed CEO in August just before the company's historic initial public offering which reduced the level of government ownership following the bailout, is on his second visit to China.

He said GM plans to do

more of its research and development as well as its engineering and design work, now largely centered in the U.S., in China.

In particular, the company's advanced research center in Shanghai will focus on new energy vehicles and batteries, he said. GM recently unveiled its electric vehicle, the Chevrolet Volt.

Akerson said the company learned painful but worthwhile lessons from its taxpayer-funded bailout: chiefly to make sure it doesn't accrue debt.

"The old GM was burdened with so much debt, they had to cut back on funding of new product, new research and development during the down cycle because they had such a heavy debt load."