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## Ford Recognized for New Seat Belt Award

DEARBORN – Ford's industry-first rear inflatable seat belts combine the attributes of traditional seat belts and airbags to provide additional crash protection, giving parents particular peace of mind since children are common rear-seat passengers.

Lead developer Srinu Sundararajan accepted the prestigious Breakthrough Product Award from *Popular Mechanics* last week in New York, on behalf of Ford Motor Company.

Rear inflatable seat belts were introduced on the 2011 Ford Explorer and will be introduced on other global vehicles in the future.

What do Ford's latest safety innovation and director/filmmaker James Cameron have in common? Both are about to receive a prestigious technology award from *Popular Mechanics*.

Ford's innovative, industry-first rear inflatable seat belts have been named a Breakthrough Product Award winner by *Popular Mechanics*, part of the magazine's seventh annual Breakthrough Awards.

The development of the technology was a team effort, Sundararajan says, and he's proud that effort is being recognized.

"Ford's goal is to develop

innovative safety technologies that give our customers more peace of mind, so it is a great honor to receive the Breakthrough Technology Award," says Sundararajan, safety technical leader for Ford Research and Innovation.

"I thank *Popular Mechanics* for recognizing the contributions of a number of dedicated engineers from Ford."

The rear inflatable seat belts are designed to provide additional protection for rear seat occupants. They combine the attributes of traditional seat belts and airbags to help provide an added level of crash safety protec-

tion for rear seat occupants.

The advanced restraint system is designed to help reduce head, neck and chest injuries for rear seat passengers, often children and older passengers who can be more vulnerable to such injuries.

Ford introduced the inflatable rear seat belts in the 2011 Explorer, bolstering the Explorer's already extensive suite of safety innovations. The vehicle already has seen strong demand from customers for its safety and driver-assist technologies.

Early data showed about 40 percent of Explorer buyers are parents who are ordering the rear inflatable belts.

## Bosch CEO Marks Is Confident Diesels Will Penetrate U.S. Market

by Gerald Scott  
News Dept.

Peter J. Marks, retiring chairman, CEO and president of Robert Bosch LLC, remains a champion of the notion that diesel passenger cars will eventually take off in the U.S. market.

For years we've been told that passenger cars with diesel engines will start to take up as much of the U.S. market as they do in Europe, but for a variety of reasons it has never come true.

Marks was asked about this during the Q&A session with media following his larger talk to the Detroit Economic Club, one that sees a significant and growing role for Bosch as a parts provider to the global auto industry.

Coincidentally, Marks is retiring at the end of the year and he leaves Bosch in excellent shape, in spite of the usual global challenges, sputtering economies on several continents and more.

But back to those diesels. "In 2013, there will be a lot of new cars coming to the market, not only from the European OEMs, but also from the Detroit Three," Marks said.

"Now we'll have a penetration rate (in the U.S.) of about

10 percent by 2015.

"Why is this? I think we have realized that the diesel car is the perfect application for our driving habits here in this market where we typically drive long distances and that's to its advantage."

Europe, of course, reports a 40 to 50 percent diesel car penetration rate for new purchases, but part of the reason there is that gasoline tends to retail between \$6 and \$7 U.S. dollars at the pump while diesel comes in somewhat under that – plus better overall mileage.

This all matters to Bosch because it assists global OEMs in developing diesel engine cars and trucks and related diesel applications such as on coach buses.

"If you look at the diesel take rate where customers have a choice between diesel and gasoline, the take rate is 30 percent (here in the U.S.)," Marks said.

"If you look at the light-duty truck market, it's 60 percent."

Marks seems to know whereof he speaks – he's one of the few auto CEOs these days who came from the engineering ranks.

The trend in the West for the first half of the 20th century was for engineers to run major OEMs and suppliers

but the prevailing trend since the financial pressures of the 1980s and 1990s is to have bean counters – financial people – in CEO and upper management roles.

Born in Singen, Germany, in 1953, Marks started his career in 1968 at age 15 as an apprentice machinery fitter.

Four years later, he completed his school education, and began a course of study in mechanical engineering at the University of Applied Sciences in Konstanz, Germany. He qualified as an engineer in 1977.

By now, many, if not most, U.S. gas stations have at least one diesel fuel pump available, so having access to diesel fuel has never been a problem for U.S. drivers. But it's commercial trucks and larger pickup trucks that are the primary customers for diesel fuel in the U.S.

Diesel passenger cars have been spotty in terms of sales and it usually has been European carmakers, particularly including Volkswagen and Mercedes, that offer reliable diesel-engine passenger cars to the U.S. market with varying degrees of success.

Auto critics have said that diesels won't truly take off in the U.S. market until GM, Ford and Chrysler not only pro-

duce them, but market them as practical as well.

In other related news, Marks said that although Bosch was a sponsor of the LeMans series race at Belle Isle back in 2007-08 when the larger IndyCar Series last visited Detroit, he did not expect Bosch to be a major supplier sponsor at the recently announced 2012 IndyCar race in Detroit.

Finally, on the topic of Bosch, which has facilities in Farmington Hills and Plymouth here in Southeastern Michigan, some good news came in from NASCAR on the motorsports front.

NASCAR last week announced that as it makes the switch from carburetion to fuel injection in 2012, Bosch will be its exclusive oxygen sensor supplier.

As an exclusive NASCAR Performance partner, Bosch will supply special wide-band oxygen sensors, specific to NASCAR race cars, which will provide essential data to the fuel injection engine management system.

Beginning with the 2012 Daytona 500, all NASCAR Sprint Cup Series race car engines will be fuel-injected.

An onboard computer will control the fuel injectors, using input from the oxygen sen-



Peter J. Marks

sors in the exhaust to determine the exact fuel provided to the airflow just as it is en-

tering the cylinder. Several NASCAR teams have been testing fuel-injected engines on-track to see how the new systems operate in actual race track conditions.

"We are pleased to partner with Bosch to ensure a seamless transition as we move to fuel-injected engines and outfit each car with two oxygen sensors," said Robin Pemberton, NASCAR vice president of competition.

"This technology will provide the opportunity for greater fuel efficiency and maximize each race team's ability to get the most performance from their fuel-injected engines."

## Chevy Marks 100th Year

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Dream Cruise, which brings more than 50,000 cars and 1.5 million car fans to Detroit's storied Woodward Avenue each year.

Chevrolet also joined with the Indianapolis 500 to celebrate 100 years of shared history, and announced that it is returning to Indy car racing as an engine supplier and as sponsor of the Detroit Grand Prix.

To connect with fans globally, Chevrolet launched its interactive Chevy100.com website earlier this year and re-

cently added two interactive web experiences: "The Road We're On" and "The Ride of Your Life."

In addition, Chevrolet asked its fans on Twitter to post questions that Alan Batey, vice president, Chevrolet sales, service and marketing, answered Thursday on the Chevrolet YouTube page.

Upcoming introductions include the Chevrolet Volt extended-range electric vehicle in Europe and China, as well as the Chevrolet Spark in the United States and Canada in 2012 and its electric sibling in select global markets in 2013.

## Former UAW-Ford Child Center Is the New 'Velocity'

STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY GERALD SCOTT

There's a great older facilities re-use project at hand in Sterling Heights that stepped to the forefront last week.

Velocity debuted as a promising new small business incubator. The facility's roots are interesting and worth exploring – it's located in the former UAW-Ford employee child care center on 18 Mile Road, east of Mound, in Sterling Heights.

The city is home to two major Ford parts factories and the child care center was something of a luxury from better auto days a decade ago.

Today, it's home to the Velocity incubator and the facility's transition from auto to mainstream business makes for a nice facility re-use story.

Together, Macomb County, Oakland University and the city of Sterling Heights are collaborating on this initiative, designed to spur new businesses and economic growth in the defense, homeland security and advanced manufacturing industries.

It is located in a SmartZone facility now called Velocity.

"This is, above all, about jobs," said Macomb County Executive Mark Hackel, one of the keynote speakers at the kickoff event last week.

"Not minimum wage jobs, but professional, technical and manufacturing jobs that support families and help stabilize our traditionally volatile economy here in Southeast Michigan."

What's more, Sterling Heights Mayor Richard Notte said that the name Velocity itself represents the speed-to-market made possible by the collaborative resources of its three major partners – Macomb County, the city of Sterling Heights and neighboring Oakland University – in launching, developing, retaining and attracting commercial enterprise within its target industries.

"Sterling Heights is the heart of the new Defense Corridor and Velocity will help ensure that Macomb County



The former UAW-Ford child care center on 18 Mile Road in Sterling Heights is the new Velocity, a small business incubator. The landlord was the Damman Hardware retail chain, which donated the previously empty building to this new business incubator project.

remains competitive and a hub for the engineering of land-based military apparatus," Notte said.

"Our intent is to develop even more businesses and jobs in the defense, homeland security and advanced manufacturing sectors. The age of new defense and advanced manufacturing . . . the age of Velocity has arrived. We're open for business."

Indeed, it's not an exaggeration for Notte to claim that Sterling Heights is the new center of the traditional defense corridor up and down Mound Road and Van Dyke, between about 8 Mile Road to the south and Hall Road to the north.

In that rectangle, particularly in Sterling Heights, is General Dynamics Land Systems' one-year-old Maneuver Collaboration Center (mc2) and laboratory at 17 Mile and Mound, while contractor BAE Systems has reclaimed the 60-acre parcel on Van Dyke, between 14 and 15 Mile, as BAE's new administrative and testing facility in the heart of Macomb County.

Velocity, meanwhile, is located at 6633 18 Mile Road, in the Sterling Heights SmartZone, a six-square-mile defense industry hub located between Mound Road and



Sterling Heights Mayor Richard Notte and Juanita Merling, president of the Bright Side roofing company.

Van Dyke.

This same SmartZone encompasses some 26 million square feet of high-tech industrial space, supporting not only the start-ups but the big hitters like the aforementioned General Dynamics and BAE Systems.

"The goal is become not just the Defense Capital of Southeast Michigan or the country, but the entire world," Hackel said.

History may prove that politicians like Mayor Notte and Executive Hackel aren't just spouting more hyperbole. Indeed, Southeast Michigan really was the Arsenal of

Democracy from about 1940 to 1960 and only the explosion of the domestic auto industry following World War II more or less usurped the area's traditional role.

One key partner of Velocity is the Macomb-OU INCubator, a business incubator operated by Oakland University.

"Oakland will ensure that the INCubator has the necessary tools for mentorship, coaching and access to resources," said OU President Gary Rossi. "The INCubator will become a nationally recognized support center for today's defense, homeland and manufacturing businesses."

## NAIAS Setting Up for a 'Really Big Show' in 2012

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and geographically associated with the auto manufacturing industry, the NAIAS will again provide the backdrop to much commentary on the state of the auto industry in general, and on the performance of the Detroit 3 in particular.

That improved performance should deliver, before the Show even opens in Cobo Center, the first entry in the "new and exciting" category – the auto industry's currently high self-esteem.

Instead of being perennially the target of criticism from business pundits, the auto manufacturers can this time around reasonably claim to be the bright spot in the nation's economy – surely a spectacular role reversal.

While Wall Street struggles for traction (and, most recently, with protesters "at the door"), and the Administration and Congress have had to act to avoid government default and shutdown, the auto companies are experiencing positive sales trends in a continued steady recovery from the badly depressed market of two or three years ago.

Also, they are posting respectable profitability, with even a record quarter here and there; they are earning debt-rating upgrades; and they have been, and will continue to be, adding jobs.

No surprise then if their leaders and employees are expressing hugely more confidence and optimism than they have felt able to do during the past several years.

This new confidence and optimism is echoed by NAIAS 2012 Chairman Bill Perkins when he talks even at this very early stage about Show plans and developments.

In a recent interview, it was clear that Perkins is very encouraged about the prospects for success, and that he was not basing that on wishful thinking or on educated guess-

work; he refers instead to important agreements already confirmed in close cooperation with auto companies, and also to the level of inquiries being received from journalists and others around the world.

An important example that was announced in June of this year is the return to a two-day press preview format.

Largely at the automakers' insistence, virtually all of the vehicle introductions at NAIAS 2011 were crammed into a single day.

The result was a very grueling day for everyone involved, especially journalists, with the first news conference beginning at 6:30 a.m., and the final preview ending more than 12 hours later at 6:40 p.m.

By contrast, the auto manufacturers (and, of course, lots of exhausted journalists) were as keen as anyone else to return to a two-day news conference format for NAIAS 2012.

In the June announcement, Bill Perkins attributed their support to the "increasing strength of the auto industry" and to the automakers' "ongoing confidence . . . in the NAIAS."

Accordingly, he added, Chrysler Group, Ford Motor Company and General Motors Company have all committed to scheduling press conferences and major new product reveals early on both press days, Jan. 9 and 10.

Perkins added that the foreign manufacturers were also adapting their product introduction plans to the two-day schedule.

Because of the six-hour time zone difference between Detroit and the European mainland, the German auto companies always require morning slots for their NAIAS press announcements, and their events are planned to follow the Chrysler, Ford and GM programs on the first press day.