

Circuit Boards Made Here for 40 Years

By Gerald Scott

Circuit board maker K & F Electronics in Fraser has quite a story to tell.

The firm is marking 40 years of business this year, doing light assembly work of basic circuit boards, which are still the heart of cars, consumer electronics, defense work and more.

K & F stands for Kincaid & Family, noting the start-up by original owner Earl Kincaid. His son, Rick, is now president of the company.

Rick Kincaid sat for an interview recently to discuss how the circuit board business has changed since the firm's inception back in 1972.

"We've been blessed with good employees here," Kincaid. "We've been on steady growth for the last year-and-a-half."

Kincaid said that there is a slight tapering of work at the moment, but business overall is good, relatively speaking.

"All of our customers I went to visit personally in Atlanta," Kincaid said.

"I saw 35 to 40 accounts,

and all of them praised us. They said, 'As long as you keep pricing where it's at and quality is up, you've got the business.'"

"I was on a roll for acquisition . . . there's probably only

180 left of us (circuit board makers) in the United States, that's it.

"There used to be 2,000 to 3,000 of us, probably 15 years ago, but now in China there's over 8,000 of them that do

what I do. In fact, Hong Kong and Japan are feeling the effects, too, now – their shops are dwindling (also in the face of the Chinese growth)."

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Circuit boards undergo cleansing baths at K & F Electronics.

Chrysler Commits to Sponsor Detroit Jazz Festival

AUBURN HILLS – The Detroit Jazz Festival has announced that the Chrysler brand will be the official presenting sponsor for the 2012 festival.

The sponsorship is an extension of its successful "Imported from Detroit" campaign, celebrating the spirit and determination of Detroit and its residents.

"The automotive industry and jazz music both have rich histories in the city of Detroit," said Gretchen Valade, chair of the Detroit Jazz Festival Foundation board of directors. The partnership between Chrysler and the Detroit Jazz Festival bridges these great histories and brings key elements of our city together.

"Welcoming Chrysler as a

presenting sponsor, and hosting its vehicles for a ride-and-drive, further proves this year will be the best festival we've seen yet."

The Chrysler brand is also the exclusive ride-and-drive sponsor participating with a unique activation at the festival, offering attendees the chance to test-drive some of the top vehicles on the road.

On-site, Chrysler will offer attendees the chance to drive the 2012 product lineup that includes the Chrysler 200, Chrysler 300 and the Chrysler Town & Country minivan.

"The Detroit Jazz Festival is just one of the many jewels of this city. It draws international acclaim and lets Detroit shine," said Saad Chehab, CEO – CEO of Chrysler Brand.

Lisa, Bill Ford to Host 'AutoGlow'

DETROIT – The Children's Center announces the return of the AutoGlow charity event to Ford Field in 2013.

The event promises to be an exciting evening, having had earlier success at Ford Field for past AutoGlow functions in 2006 and 2008.

Lisa and Bill Ford are pleased to return as co-hosts for AutoGlow, which will take place on Jan. 18. A pre-reception will be held starting at 4:30 p.m. with the main event starting at 8 p.m.

Note that the 2012 AutoGlow was a monumental suc-

cess, generating \$242,000 net for The Children's Center.

The move to Ford Field for 2013 will provide sponsors and guests with increased seating capacities. In addition, reserved seating will be available with sponsorships of \$25,000 and above.

"We are thrilled that Ford Field will host the 2013 AutoGlow, which is presented by Ford Motor Company and benefits The Children's Center," said Tom Lewand, president, The Detroit Lions & Ford Field. Ford has supported the charity for 80 years.



The C-MAX is projected to get at least 3 mpg better than Prius v.

IDGA Puts Military Vehicles in Front of Customers

By Gerald Scott

The Motor City, it seems, is not only home to the domestic auto industry, but more and more it's reviving itself as home to the military's motor market, so to speak, as well.

Case in point was last week's well-attended 2012 IDGA Military Vehicles Exhibition & Conference, which ran at Cobo Center for a four-day stretch, July 10-13.

Think of it as a military version of the SAE Congress – not quite as big, of course – but the same idea for putting military and defense contractors in front of customers.

Now in its fourth year, the function seems to be hitting stride as a wide variety of national vendors had vehicles, parts, systems and weapons on display.

In the four years of the show, Nicole Borden, director of production for the Institute for Defense & Government Advancement (IDGA), said, "We have grown our speaking roster from 20 to 50 high-level speakers and presenters.

"We are expecting that this expansion will provide more valuable information to our delegates."

Everyone is familiar with defense industry heavyweights like General Dynamics, Navistar, BAE Systems and the like, but this show had new vehicles on display

from newer players such as The Armored Group, Master Pull, MarcorSyscom, Amerex Corp. and more.

As it happened, The Armored Group had on display a Chevrolet Suburban, built at the GM Arlington plant, that was upfitted with armor and all of the safety accoutrements for its government,

homeland security, private security customers and the like.

Locally, Continental Tire had a booth at the show, as did a wide variety of military vehicle systems integrators and weapons providers.

With Detroit being the historic Arsenal of Democracy, as we all know, a show with a growing magnitude like the

IDGA event seems to make sense for an annual gathering at Cobo Center.

IDGA is actually a division of IQPC (International Quality & Productivity Center), which is a non-partisan, information-based organization dedicated to the promotion of innovative ideas across the national defense industry.



Thomas Harbeck of military supplier Tiburon at Cobo Center last week.

GM Retirees Researching Options On Lump Sum Benefit Payment

By Jennifer Knightstep

When Dick Thompson of GM's Advanced Technology Vehicles was considering retirement, he had questions about which option – one lump-sum payment or a traditional pension – would be best for him and his family.

To get answers, Thompson and his wife attended a seminar created just for that purpose, and, he says, he got the information he needed to make his decision.

In the 10-plus years since his retirement, Thompson feels sure he made the right decision, but in hindsight, other retirees haven't been as confident in their decisions.

One of them was John Schindler Jr., the father of John Schindler of the Schindler Group at UBS Financial Services in Birmingham.

Less than three years after retirement, the elder Schindler died unexpectedly, forfeiting what might have been a hefty estate back to Ford Motor Company, since pensions aren't transferable.

It was his father's decision, and its aftermath, that led John Schindler and his colleague, Jeff Davies, to create a series of seminars, similar to the one Thompson and his wife attended, to educate Ford and GM employees considering their own retirement options.

In short, he doesn't want anyone else's family to endure the difficulty his family suffered.

"There are a few situations in which the lump sum makes the most sense," says

Schindler.

For example, if the person considering retirement has a special-needs child, a lump sum is a good idea because it allows for the creation of a trust for the child's ongoing care.

There are other circumstances – such as a change in marital status or savings history – that a potential retiree will want to take into consideration.

But, Schindler says, one of the most important things for someone who's debating the pension-vs.-lump-sum issue can do is get a thorough physical exam.

"Longevity is a key component of this decision," explains Schindler. "You should review your health status and the potential of requiring outside care. Pensions can complicate long-term-care issues."

Schindler points out that the deadline for making the retirement decision is looming for most current GM employees on the cusp of retirement, and only a few weeks remain for Ford employees.

With those deadlines in mind, Schindler wants to make sure every potential retiree is well-educated, especially the "procrastinators," or the people who are still on the fence.

"There's still time to make a well-informed decision," he says. Monday night, July 16, and Tuesday, July 17, are the last of his web-cast seminars, or "webinars," available for free to any Ford or GM employee pondering their retirement options.

C-MAX Goes After Prius On MPG, Lower Sticker

DEARBORN – Ford's new C-MAX Hybrid soon will make a big statement in the largest hybrid segment with projected leading fuel economy of 47 mpg city – beating the Toyota Prius v by 3 mpg, Ford officials say, plus a \$1,300-lower base price.

The segment for small hybrids such as the C-MAX Hybrid and Prius accounts for 65 percent of all hybrid sales. Ford expects about half of C-MAX buyers to be conquest customers trading in competitive models.

Ford has simultaneously increased hybrid efficiency and performance while reducing cost, the automaker says.

The result is an expected payback period of two years for the hybrid technology premium compared with leading small crossovers, say Ford officials.

This is about half of the four-year period Ford research shows could trigger more mainstream hybrid sales.

"The C-MAX Hybrid builds on Ford's 20 years of hybrid innovation and fuel-efficient offerings to take on Prius v with better city fuel economy at 47 mpg and at better value – a great chance for us to shake up the hybrid market," said Raj Nair, group vice president, Global Product Development.

"C-MAX Hybrid delivers 3 mpg more than Prius v with 50 more horsepower and exclusive technologies such as our hands-free liftgate – and the \$1,300-lower base price means the payback period will be the smallest in the segment."

Ford research highlights other ways in which hybrids could become more mainstream. The gap in average income between hybrid and conventional vehicle buyers has decreased by half – from about \$30,000 to \$15,000 – in the past few years.

The C-MAX Hybrid, say

Ford officials, is expected to be America's most affordable hybrid utility vehicle with a base price of \$25,995, including destination and delivery, which is \$1,300 lower than Toyota Prius v.

C-MAX Hybrid is part of Ford's first dedicated line of hybrid vehicles and currently available for order at select dealerships.

The projected 47 mpg city and 44 mpg highway ratings to be delivered by C-MAX Hybrid beat the fuel economy of Toyota Prius v with its 44 mpg city and 40 mpg highway.

The vehicle also can be driven 500-plus miles with total system horsepower of 188, compared with total system horsepower of 134 from Toyota Prius v and Prius.

The power of C-MAX Hybrid stems from the combination of a gasoline engine and a battery-driven electric motor.

When powered by gasoline, the C-MAX Hybrid uses the all-new 2.0-liter Atkinson-cycle four-cylinder engine – powerful and fuel-efficient and among the most advanced non-turbocharged four-cylinder powertrains Ford has ever offered.

C-MAX Hybrid also offers class-exclusive technologies such as the available hands-free liftgate, optional active park assist and SmartGauge with EcoGuide, along with the ability to deliver higher speeds in electric mode than Toyota Prius v.

The latest-generation SmartGauge with EcoGuide is designed to help drivers get the most from the C-MAX Hybrid, providing information such as instantaneous fuel economy to help them more closely monitor how their driving behavior affects the vehicle's efficiency.

A new Brake Coach feature helps drivers optimize their use of the braking system so that driving range can be enhanced through proper braking techniques.