

GM Tech Center Employee Car Show Continues to Shine

By Gerald Scott

If there has been a bigger or better GM Tech Center Employee Car Show in Warren in recent years that surpassed the 2012 event in size, impact, car quality and quantity, well, we sure can't remember when it was.

Thanks to both the GM and UAW organizers and the participating employees themselves, the 2012 show was a dandy indeed as the weather held out and some 800-plus classic cruisers, hot rods and relics lined the east campus during lunch hour on July 25.

"We had 780 cars pre-register and more than 50 register at the gate, so we're above 800 and it's a pretty good turnout today. The really good weather helps, too."

Note that to make sure the show events and setup ran smoothly, Duncan arrived at the Tech Center on the morning of the show at 4:30 a.m. But of course the hard work paid off as thousands of Tech Center employees toured the row after row of cars lined up on the east campus green space along the Van Dyke fence.

The UAW Region 1 Color Guard presented the U.S. flag and UAW-GM employee Ron O'Shea sang the National Anthem at the event's kickoff ceremonies at the main stage.

Said Andy Pawlaczyk, shop chairman, "To put out a car show of this magnitude takes a lot of effort - I'd like to thank Bill Duncan, the car show committee and all the volunteers who helped put this together. It's a great day, there's a lot to look at and we're all truly blessed to be with this organization."

The \$2 entry fee for each registered car will eventually go to favorite UAW-GM charities and a 1955 pedal car was also auctioned off to benefit charities. The Warren Cousin High School color guard performed at the stage as well, helping to invite the community into the show.

Speaking of the show, with 830 cars to choose from, there was chromed glory and delight everywhere you looked.

The Tech Center employee audience has a broad definition of car cool, so it wasn't just 1955 Chevy Bel Airs that were on display. Non-GM cool cars spotted at the show included a 1966 Shelby Cobra, a 1978 Volkswagen microbus and a couple of 1960s-era Dodge Chargers. So cool is cool.

Gary Hand, a UAW-GM retiree, had his 1968 Camaro at



The view of the GM Tech Center Employee Car Show from the hill at the north end of the lake.

the show and he was tickled he was able to display and visit the event.

"I was at 13.5 years altogether, I started in Pontiac. They call it the Validation Center? I transferred here (to Warren) in 2005 and retired in 2008," Hand said. And he was proud of how crisp and shiny his Camaro was.

"When I got it, it was pretty much rusty with holes in the roof. (A body worker) had it for six months, he did all my body work. I took it to a place called Strip It on Groesbeck, they media-blasted it right down to bare metal. I took all the chrome out, polished the chrome myself. The bumpers I had re-chromed."

Asked why he cruised in a 44-year-old car, Hand said, "This makes you feel young again, you know?"

Indeed, cars and nostalgia seem to go hand-in-hand, whether here at the Employee Car Show or the Woodward Dream Cruise in a few weeks - the themes seem very similar as a number of classic car owners pick the year, make and model of the car to rehab based on their misspent youth. Hand, for example, graduated from high school in 1962 but likes the charm that his 1968 Camaro evokes.

Another GM retiree with similar feelings was Steve Wolken of Rochester Hills, formerly a manager at Cadillac.

He had his 1958 Cadillac on display and he's actually owned the car since he was a



UAW-GM Human Resource Center handed out racing posters.

teenager - over 50 years or more.

"I drove this car in high school where I grew up in St. Louis," Wolken pointed out. "Back then they laughed at me for this (big land boat) car. Now, when I go back for a reunion, I'm the only one there still driving the same car he drove in high school."

The car was gifted to Wolken by his great uncle and it still looks as good as the day it came off the assembly line back in 1957 as a 1958 model year vehicle.

In that sense, these cars really are like time machines.

VEC employees Curt Diss, Jeffrey Lawrence, Brad Kincannon and Carl Diss were touring the show together with GM retiree Carl Eggers

and Jeffrey Lawrence's 4-year-old son Nicholas.

As they browsed the lot, they were impressed with how "simple" some of the powertrains were, especially one from a 1938 Chevrolet Deluxe touring car. One could get an automotive lesson, just visiting these glorious cars, from decade to decade, gleaning how the automotive forefathers put together cars in ways still being used in some measure by the current folks working in the car business.

Fun, auto history, sunshine and hot dogs all mixed together at the GM Tech Center Employee Car Show this year and, truly, who could ask for a better combination than that?

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VEC employees Curt Diss, Jeffrey Lawrence, Carl Eggers (retiree), Brad Kincannon and Carl Diss. Front center is Nicholas Lawrence.



UAW-GM retiree Gary Hand with his 1968 Chevrolet Camaro.

KUKA Hosts Tech Event, Open House

SHELBY TWP. - The first annual Technology Event and open house will be held at KUKA Robotics on Aug. 14-15. The event will include two days of technology presentations, demonstrations, facility tours and new product displays.

As part of the event, KUKA will host a variety of presentations from industry-leading technology providers:

- The Robotics Friction Stir Weld Solution by Grenzbach;
- Advancements in Fiber Laser Technology for Manufacturing by IPG Photonics;
- Robotics Off Line Programming Advancements by In House Solutions/Robot Master;
- Robotic Gripping - Past,

Present and Future by Schunk;

- Increasing Productivity and Flexibility with Innovative Robotic End Effector Products by ATI;
- Robotics and Job Creation by the Robotics Industry Assn. (RIA);

Also, the KR AGILUS small robot series will be on display for visitors to see.

KUKA Robotics is located at 51870 Shelby Parkway in Shelby Township.

Visit kukarobotics.com for more details.

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