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"FIRST IN THE HEART OF DETROIT SINCE 1933" NEW CENTER NEWS

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Woodward in Anticipation of Dream Cruise

By Gerald Scott

ROYAL OAK – Never mind the third Saturday in August, which is the annual day on which the Woodward Dream Cruise is held.

More and more, the Dream Cruise, at least in theory, is becoming a year-round theme on Woodward, or at least coming off the first thaw back in March.

You can hear rubber tires squealing on Woodward most any time of year these days, but lately the intensity has increased in anticipation of the official Cruise date, Saturday, Aug. 18.

At the Sam's Shell on Woodward, the cruisers have long since been gathering in anticipation of the big show. Lawn chairs toward the curb and cruise cars inside the sidewalk have all been gathering along Woodward.

By coincidence, the retail gasoline sign at Sam's Shell read "\$4.09" last week – a coincidental or accidental reference to the Beach Boys song from the 1960s about a Chevrolet 409 engine.

Also at Sam's Shell last week, in anticipation of the Cruise, were regular visitors Peter Devita (1967 Firebird), Bart Devita (1967 Impala), Bart Montante (1963 Corvette) and Gary Cook (2001 Corvette).

They have been regulars at Sam's for the past four years, just



Sam's Shell has become the epicenter for cruising Woodward in the new millennium.

as Sam and Bob Bahoor's gas market has become ground zero for Woodward cruisers.

Also on hand at Sam's the same night was Dave Glenn, a mechanic who is a service tech working

on executive cars at Ford World Headquarters in Dearborn. He had on display his 1967 Mustang.

Elsewhere at the Cruise, supplier Plex Systems of Auburn Hills is sponsoring the numerous road

signs that will guide cruisers up and down the avenue.

"We're proud to support the Woodward Dream Cruise, the true hallmark of summertime in Detroit," said Plex marketing vice

president Patrick Fetterman.

"We are excited to cheer for our favorite Motor City vehicles and also support Make-a-Wish Foundation through our Plex Giving activities," he added.

Why Dodge Bailed on NASCAR

By Gerald Scott

Shocked but not surprised was the general Big Three and local motorsports reaction to the announcement from Chrysler last week that its Dodge brand will be pulling out of NASCAR at the conclusion of the 2012 season.

Dodge Motorsports was folded into SRT Motorsports (Street and Racing Technology) and is the Chrysler connection to NASCAR.

Ralph Gilles, president and CEO of SRT Motorsports, made the formal announcement last week. The decision affects current involvement in both the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series and NASCAR Nationwide Series.

Penske Racing currently fields two Dodge Charger cars in the Sprint Cup Series and two Dodge Challenger cars in the Nationwide.

It must be noted that Penske Racing announced back in February that it would end its partnership with Dodge, which started in 2003, at the end of the 2012 season.

"We've spent an intense five months working to identify and evaluate all options for our future involvement in NASCAR," Gilles said.

"A number of opportunities emerged, and our team worked diligently to put a structure together to fit our overall business and competitive objectives. While we have been pleased and enthused with the amount of interest from teams and sponsors over that time, in the end, we simply couldn't develop the right structure," Gilles said.

Overall, Dodge has recorded 215 wins in the Sprint Cup Series, including 55 victories since 2001, and has been represented in the NASCAR Chase for the Sprint

Cup seven of the eight seasons.

In 2010, driver Brad Keselowski captured the NASCAR Nationwide Series championship in a Dodge from Penske Racing.

"It's an extremely difficult decision to know that we won't be there for our fans next season," Gilles added. "It's important to note that we have not lost focus in 2012 or the commitment to our partnership with Penske Racing in both the Sprint Cup Series and Nationwide Series this season."

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Doug L. Parks

GM Aligns New Global Team

WARREN, Mich. – General Motors is restructuring its vehicle line team structure within its Global Product Development organization to consolidate current vehicle development executive roles and streamline global vehicle development.

"The realignment reduces complexity and drives single-point accountability for the execution of our vehicle programs," said Mary Barra, GM senior vice president, Global Product Development.

"These changes allow the vehi-

cle teams to focus on what they do best – develop industry-leading cars, trucks and crossovers that delight customers and deliver solid profit margins."

In the previous structure, a product program was developed under the direction of a vehicle line executive, vehicle line director and vehicle chief engineer.

In the new structure, product programs will be consolidated under one executive chief engineer for each program, all of

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Ford Bio-Laboratory Hosts National Soybean Conference in Dearborn

By Gerald Scott

DEARBORN – The United Soybean Board (USB) brought its Bio-based Stakeholders Workshop to the Ford Research and Innovation Center in Dearborn last week and there were many benefits as a result.

A series of youngsters spon-

sored by environmental groups such as Greening of Detroit and Michigan State University were on hand to hear lectures from the likes of U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow and Ford Vice President Robert Brown.

It was a two-day function at Ford's research labs but there

was also a sidetrip to the Cherry Hill Farms, a large, still working farm near Ypsilanti owned by Ford Motor Co. and previously used as a Ford tractor proving grounds of sorts.

Ford hosted the United Soybean Board participants at the farms for an evening meal and tours the first night.

Otherwise, the event was also a chance for the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to see firsthand just how deep Ford is involved in bio-based research.

"I want to acknowledge the tremendous contribution Ford and USB are making to this

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Ford research scientist Tim Wallington, left, briefs U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow and U.S. Ag Secretary Tom Vilsack at the biofuel lab.