

# 'Silent' Convoy of Volts Eases Down Woodward

By Gerald Scott

So there they were – dozens of Chevrolet Volts, at least 50 in all, turning from the Radisson Hotel parking lot onto Woodward Ave. last week – and not a peep from them at all.

Maybe until you're around them in a group, one forgets just how quiet the Chevrolet Volt – GM's plug-in, hybrid electric vehicle, really is.

This all became notable because Chevrolet had treated 50 local Volt owners to an ice cream social at the Radisson last week, on the Tuesday evening prior to the Dream Cruise.

With the 18th annual Cruise long being known for squealing tires and loud horsepower emanating from jacked-up engines and dual-chrome exhaust pipes, well, the appearance of a Volt fleet en masse – silent sentries – parading down the drag ever so gently, neatly and keenly.

The Volt ice cream social was actually the formal kickoff of four days worth of organized activities by Chevrolet, which is in the second year of a three-year overall sponsorship of the larger Woodward Dream Cruise.

"The Woodward Dream Cruise is a true celebration of America's love affair with the automobile and the open road, and for Chevrolet it is an opportunity for us to connect with some of our most passionate customers and their families," said Chris Perry, Chevrolet global vice president of Marketing, in a blanket press statement describing why the brand is now so closely aligned with the Cruise.

Although the casual, informal parade of silent Volts down Woodward was perhaps a harbinger of things to come for the future of the auto industry, nostalgia nonetheless reigns supreme when it comes to the Dream Cruise and the social and pop cultural mythologies associated with it.

Besides the ice cream social on behalf of the Volties, Chevrolet was all over the lower half of Woodward, one might say.

On top of the north-to-south Volt casual cruise, Chevrolet used the Dream Cruise to help celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Corvette (c. 1955) and all of the auto-folklore that goes along

with the 'Vette – billed as America's Sports Car.

At 13 Mile and Woodward, Northwood Plaza in Royal Oak, the annual GM Design on Woodward gathering brought thousands of visitors there to ogle GM Design staffers' personal cars during the day last Wednesday.

Then, from Thursday through the Saturday of the Dream Cruise, Chevrolet Performance division had a big display that included a collection of performance show vehicles and production vehicles, a motorsports display, and a variety of Chevrolet performance parts also on static display for gearheads to enjoy.

But, ah, perhaps the 2012 Woodward Dream Cruise will be remembered as much for those



Chevy Volts entering Woodward after gathering at the Radisson Hotel in Bloomfield Hills.

Silent Sentries tooling down the Avenue as much as all of the nostalgic chrome, 20-inch wheels, and

steel fenders from yesteryear.

All in all, one gets the impression that Chevrolet really is get-

ting its corporate-sponsorship-money's worth from being the top corporate dog on the block.

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**Ray Stemple**  
 rstemple@edrinke.com

**Nicole Dodge**  
 nhuminski@edrinke.com

**Jim Pfeife**  
 jpfeife@edrinke.com

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**Dennis Thacker**  
 dthacker@edrinke.com

**Paul Makowski**  
 pmakowski@edrinke.com

## City of Detroit Retail Proposals Sought by DEGC

The Detroit Economic Growth Corp. has announced a request from entrepreneurs and existing businesses interested in starting full-time and pop-up retail establishments in the Villages of Detroit.

The DEGC, in partner with Villages CDC and the building owners of the Parkstone Apartments and West Village Manor Apartments, plan to activate an entire block of Agnes Street from Parker to Van Dyke in Detroit's historic West Village with unique retail and food-centric businesses.

These properties are in a dense, walkable area next to the Tashmoo Biergarten and are in close proximity to Indian Village, Belle Isle and Detroit's so-called "Gold Coast."

Together, the organizations have secured grant funding and private investment to build out 5 to 7 retail storefronts. They plan to start property improvements this September with the goal of creating move-in ready space between late fall and year end.

This project represents the first phase of a larger retail program for The Villages and will serve as the pilot project for DEGC's new neighborhood.

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