

Diana Ortega Champions GM's Hispanic HIT

This week figures to be quite a busy one in the life of GM Tech Center MP Lead Engineer Diana Ortega.

She's a board member of the Hispanic Initiative Team (HIT), and employee resource group within General Motors and they are hosting an Hispanic Heritage Celebration dinner Oct. 10 at the Venetian Club in Madison Heights that she is organizing.

With more than 100 people slated to attend, the dinner is already a success. That, and they managed to recruit new GM Chief Diversity Officer Ken Barrett as the keynote speaker. He and 20 GM plant managers will be in attendance to learn more about the Hispanic market and culture.

Ortega works at the Vehicle Engineering Center at the GM Tech Center in Warren and she took a few minutes out of her busy schedule to discuss the upcoming dinner, her career path and other matters of interest.

"I've worked at GM for 14 years, I'm a manufacturing engineer, a lead engineer," Ortega said.

"(I've worked on) the Chevrolet Sonic, the Cadillac SRX, previous truck programs, full-size truck, Chevy Cruze, so many.

"I started my career in Pontiac, at Pontiac East Assembly, the truck plant. I started there, then went on to Truck, main campus, which was there in Pontiac, then I moved here in 2005. I even did an international assignment - I

lived in Mexico for two years - Silao Assembly, which was right in the middle of the country.

"I've been involved with the Affinity group for about 5 years, but I'm now a board member as of January 2012. One of my first tasks was to lead the team on the planning for an All Peoples Meeting - we had one in May, and then now we're having Hispanic Heritage in October."

Ortega is pleased that more than 100 people will attend this function and that so many GM executives and business leaders have promised to be on hand, offering support for her cause.

"The Hispanic Heritage Celebration is more social, the one in May is more state of business," she said. "The May one was about connecting with our customers, so we had (GM Vice President) Alicia Boler-Davis come in and talk about the customer experience and the Hispanic market, and how we tie that in. It was very interesting.

"The event in May was about 75, so it was a full house. This event, we gear to over 100 folks. We have Latino community partners, followed by GM employees.

"We have a lot of goals. Our main goals are to promote Hispanic development and professional development. The other is to reinforce our community involvement - to help bridge that. The third would be Workplace of Choice initiatives as well, making sure we're the top candidate's pick when



GM Tech Center engineer Diana Ortega.

we're out there recruiting. "I sit on a recruiting team, that's another role I started in June. I'm part of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers recruiting team here at GM."

Ortega herself is a graduate of the University of Detroit Mercy (engineering) and also she received her MBA from the University of Michigan - Flint. "I went to work full-time and then did an aggressive 24-month MBA (program)," she recalled.

As far as external recruiting goes, Ortega said that the University of Puerto Rico and several

University of Texas campuses have been generating Hispanic engineering talent for General Motors of late.

She's a member of the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers as well as the National Society of Hispanic MBAs.

All of the education and work has paid off for her. Now, she's extending her hand to her fellow Latinos to help them move up the food chain in the auto industry as well. Overall, Ortega described engineering as a very challenging, but also a very satisfying profession for her.

Chrysler Museum Hosts Taste of AH Thursday Evening

This year's Taste features area restaurants, entertainment, beer and wine vendors, an ice carving demo and networking with local professionals.

The event is Thursday, Oct. 11, from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Chrysler Museum off Featherstone Rd. in Auburn Hills.

Pay at the door. Tickets are \$25 for adults and \$10 for children.

PwC Autofacts Is Predicting 2012 Sales of 14.5M

DETROIT - Despite tepid economic growth, it is expected that new light vehicle sales will reach 14.5 million in the U.S. in 2012, and moderately increase in 2013, according to new data from PwC's Autofacts.

PwC attributes this growth to factors including the return of auto financing and subprime loans, coupled with pent-up demand from an estimated 11 million consumers who have deferred their purchases of new vehicles.

PwC added that there is still room for growth in the light vehicle market and that other opportunities are emerging in the subprime vehicle market. It turns out that subprime consumers now make up more than 35 percent of the U.S. population.

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