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"COVERS THE HUB OF MACOMB COUNTY'S AUTO INDUSTRY" SINCE 1976

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From Warren Garage to 100,000 Square Feet of Success

Story and photo by Gerald Scott

Harry Major Machine in Clinton Township is marking 50 years in business this year and there's quite a hometown-guy-makes-good story behind the story.

Harry Major was a World War II veteran who came back to town and worked in the machining industry. By 1962, he was ready to branch out on his own.

The firm has since grown from its roots in a Warren garage to 100,000 square feet of industrial space in Clinton Township, very near M-59 and Gratiot, in a technology park south of M-59.

There, the late Harry Major's son, H. Curtis Major, the current president, picks up the story.

"He was originally from Pittsburgh, Pa. Driving out West they stopped in Detroit, met up with a buddy of theirs to spend a few nights in town," Major said.

"Their buddy in Detroit had a job at a company called Wilson Machine Products, on Beaufait in Detroit. My father and his buddy put their applications in and next thing you know they were hired.

"He worked there in his early 20s, got drafted, World War II, Japan, did his tour of duty there and after World War II he came back to his job at Wilson. It transferred from Wilson Machine to

Wilson Automation. It was one of the first automation companies out there in the Detroit area.

"When they started producing higher volumes (post-war) of cars and automating their lines, they were on the cutting edge of automation.

"He (Harry) just had a passion for the business and a passion for knowledge – he'd gone to trade school in Pennsylvania, he was a good machinist and was very knowledgeable about building machines and equipment.

"I think by age 25 he was shop superintendent (at Wilson)."

Major said that his dad always wanted to start his own business by age 40. He got there, plus a couple years, so that by 1962 he was finally ready to start out on his own.

Thus, Harry Major Machine was born.

"He wasn't 40, he was 42 when he started, he decided to break off from Wilson Automation," Major recalled.

"He learned it there, he had the Ford, GM and Chrysler contacts from that business. And then when he started his own, he actually started doing work for Wilson Automation and other automation companies – he would've been a Tier II at that time. He was a sub-supplier to those guys."

But what started out small and slow is today something of a juggernaut, as Major's legacy company has prospered since his death in 1995. HMM's new facility in Clinton Township opened in 1996, it was purpose-built and accommodates that 100,000 square feet of industrial activity where HMM produces parts conveyors for GM, Ford, Chrysler and other major clients.

In 50 years, H. Curtis Major is proud that three generations of the automotive Major family have worked there, counting father Harry, son Curtis and now his own daughter, Lauren, a recent Michigan State graduate, works at the firm as well.

"His first building was on Blackstone, in the 10 Mile and Schoenherr area of Warren, a 5,000-square-foot building," H. Curtis recalled. And yes, Curtis swept the floors under the watchful eye of his father as a kid and, of course, today he runs it.

Eventually, the firm grew enough where they moved to a somewhat larger facility at 14 Mile and Groesbeck. After that, they finally settled into their current digs in Clinton Township.

"He just sort of grew the business, and the main portion of our business is custom automation system, custom conveyors, custom robotics systems and indus-



Harry Major (painting), Lauren and her father, H. Curtis Major.

trial parts washer for the industrial parts manufacturing industry," Major said. "Most of that being automotive-related, because that's who does the capital

equipment spending in our line of work. That's where our base is at – 98 percent of our business in our 50 years has come from the auto industry."

Auto Sales: Chrysler and GM Up, Ford Even

by Gerald Scott

The Big Three new car sales scorecard for September was reported last week and two car-makers prospered, somewhat, while one broke even for the month.

In other words, Chrysler led all automakers with a 12 percent increase in September (compared with the same month a year ago), while GM was up just 1.5 percent and Ford was off at a 0.1 percent drop.

"Passenger cars have been the launch point for a broad and deep GM product offensive," said Kurt McNeil, vice president of U.S. Sales Operations.

"Auto sales will continue to be a bright spot for the U.S. economy, which is particularly good news for GM as we walk into an even stronger cadence of new products in 2013 and 2014."

What's more, 70 percent of GM nameplates will be all new or redesigned in 2012 and 2013.

Meanwhile, Chrysler reported its best September sales month since 2007.

Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Ram Truck and Fiat brands each posted year-over-year sales gains during the month. In fact, September marked Chrysler Group's

30th consecutive month of year-over-year sales gains.

"Last month marked our 30th consecutive month of year-over-year sales increases and our strongest September in five years," said Reid Bigland, president and CEO – Dodge Brand and head of U.S. Sales.

"Going forward with our current product lineup, record low interest rates and a stable U.S. economy, we remain optimistic about the health of the U.S. new vehicle sales industry and our position in it."

As the production ramp-up of the all-new Dodge Dart compact sedan continues in Belvidere, Ill., assembly plant, Dart sales of 5,235 units were up a significant 72 percent in September, compared with August of this year.

And then there was Ford, which pointed to lower truck

sales as the culprit behind that 0.1 percent drop.

Company-wide, September car sales actually climbed 1.6 percent as truck sales fell 7.6 percent, due in part to the discontinuation of the Ranger light truck. Utility vehicle sales were up 8.7 percent for the month.

Then there was a key point brought up by Alec Gutierrez, senior auto analyst at Kelley Blue Book (KBB), which tracks sales trends nationally.

Gutierrez suggested that the aging fleet of cars in the U.S. market today will actually work in the OEMs' favor in the long run.

KBB says healthy consumer demand will continue to drive industry sales growth and is expected to account for nearly 85 percent of total sales volume in September. Rising sales throughout the year are due largely to

pent-up demand from those who have delayed purchases because of economic uncertainty.

"The average vehicle on the road today is approximately 11 years old. Those consumers that have delayed their purchase of a new vehicle during the past several years due to economic reasons are finally making the decision to trade up to something new," said Gutierrez.

"As a vehicle ages beyond 10 years old, or has more than 100,000 miles on the odometer, rising maintenance costs and deteriorating reliability can become a serious headache. Drivers of older vehicles are keenly aware of this fact and many are opting to take advantage of the near zero percent finance offers on today's more reliable and fuel-efficient vehicles to achieve peace of mind."



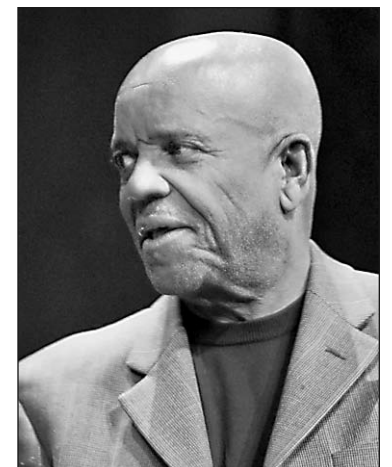
Dodge Dart



Chevrolet Spark



Ford F-Series trucks



Motown's Berry Gordy, Jr.

Chrysler To Tap 'Motown'

AUBURN HILLS – The Chrysler brand and producers Kevin McCollum, Doug Morris and Berry Gordy have announced an unprecedented relationship with "Motown: the Musical," based on the life of legendary Motown founder and Detroit native Berry Gordy, Jr.

"Cars are the heart of Detroit and the music of Motown is its soul," said Olivier Francois, chief marketing officer, Chrysler Group LLC.

"The fortitude and determination of these musical founders who carved their own path and had the faith to overcome any obstacle truly reflects the spirit of the Chrysler brand's 'Imported from Detroit' campaign.

"The Chrysler brand is honored to be part of this epic event that details the history of Motown, celebrates the music of its time and shares with the world how the city of Detroit serves as a source of inspiration. It's extraordinary events such as these that helped to define the values of the Chrysler brand."

GM Hispanic Initiative Team to Host 100 on Wednesday

GM's Hispanic Initiative Team (HIT) is hosting a Hispanic Heritage Celebration dinner 6-9 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 10, at the Venetian Club in Madison Heights. Dinner is \$25 and the kickoff is at 5:30 p.m.

More than 100 people are expected to attend.

GM Tech Center MP lead engineer Diana Ortega is hosting the event, which will include a

keynote talk from new GM Chief Diversity Officer Ken Barrett.

Ortega is a board member on the GM Hispanic Initiative Team, which is an Employee Resource Group within General Motors.

"I've been involved with the Affinity group for about 5 years," said Ortega, "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.

"We encourage everybody (including non-Hispanics) to attend, we do not discriminate. The more awareness that we are able to promote, I think it's good for everybody, it's a win-win for GM, HIT and for everyone.

"The Hispanic Heritage is more social, the one in May is more

state of business, 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."

For ticket info, E-mail Diana Ortega at Diana.Ortega@gm.com.

RELATED STORY ON PAGE 3