

GM's Guangde Proving Ground 'A World-Class Facility'

SHANGHAI – General Motors, SAIC, Shanghai GM and the Pan Asia Technical Automotive Center (PATAC) have opened China's largest proving ground, capable of conducting 67 driving conditions over 37 miles of test roads.

The 2.18-square-mile Guangde Proving Ground in Guangde County, Anhui, represents an investment of \$253 million. Shanghai GM and PATAC are overseeing the proving ground's operation, which includes comprehensive support facilities.

"GM has brought some of our industry's most advanced technology and processes to the Guangde Proving Ground," said Kevin Wale, president, GM China, and chief country operations officer, China, India and ASEAN.

"Our goal from the beginning was to make this a world-class facility. The greatest beneficiary will be our customers, who will receive even higher-quality vehicles that are equal to those built and sold anywhere else in the world," Wale said.

The proving ground can carry out development, validation, certification, quality control evaluation, load data collection and analysis for vehicles less than 7.5 tons.

It can accommodate up to 140 vehicles for testing simultaneously. About 12.4 million miles worth of testing are expected to be conducted annually.

To simulate different driving conditions in China, the proving ground contains eight specific test areas: an oval track, vehicle dynamics test area, long straight-away, ride-and-handling loop, noise test road, durability test area, corrosion test area and hill test area. In addition, it has 247,569 square feet of auxiliary space for labs, repair facilities and private workshops.

The Guangde Proving Ground will support the design and development of vehicles by Shanghai GM and PATAC, significantly improving testing efficiency, shortening product development time and reducing testing costs.

It will complement PATAC's facilities in Shanghai, which include a Noise, Vibration and Harshness (NVH) Lab, Vehicle Safety Lab, Envision Visualiza-

tion Center and Climate Wind Tunnel.

Shanghai GM builds, imports and sells a range of Buick, Cadillac and Chevrolet products. In 2011, it had record domestic sales of 1.2 million vehicles.

PATAC provides automotive engineering services, including design, development, testing and validation of components and vehicles.



3M's Uniform Lighting Lens

Uniform Lighting Lens Available on '13 Buick Enclave

DETROIT – At its 2012 Transportation Summit last week, 3M displayed its Uniform Lighting Lens (ULL) technology to its OEM transportation customers and their suppliers.

The Summit was an event that showcased the newest technology solutions designed to address industry challenges such as alternative energy, weight reduction, safety, sustainability, passenger comfort, personalization and quality.

The ULL innovation, which allows for new design and performance possibilities for LED illuminated tail lights, is a unique light management solution utilizing a precision micro-patterned polycarbonate providing even illumination when used as an inner lens in LED tail lamp designs.

The ULL technology can be seen on its first commercial vehicle application, the 2013 Buick Enclave.

"Our Uniform Lighting Lens technology is a solution to several challenges our customers face," said Jeff Boettcher, new business development manager, 3M Automotive.



General Motors and its Chinese partners recently opened China's largest automotive proving ground.

1907 Dolson Returns to Its Roots in Michigan Community

CHARLOTTE, Mich. (AP) – Joe Pray has been on a quest to bring a Dolson automobile back home for 30 years.

The crank-motor cars were manufactured in Charlotte from 1904 to 1907, just two blocks from Pray Funeral Home, the local resident's family business.

The Dolson Automotive Company went bankrupt shortly after the turn of the century – and tracking down one of their cars has been a community undertaking.

But recently, years of keeping an eye on the few remaining Dolsons scattered around the country finally paid off.

Pray, with the help of some local investors willing to help foot the bill for the car, bought what he believes is the last one of its kind at an auction in Plymouth.

The 1907 Dolson arrived by semi-truck to Pray's family business on Aug. 1. A crowd gathered

outside the parking lot to cheer on its arrival.

Residents cheered when it arrived and stayed to watch Pray and his father Joe Sr. crank up the brass auto, fill it with gasoline and take it for a short spin.

"This is the only one that anybody seems to know of," said Pray, of the car, which still runs and retains most of its original parts. "It's a nice car that's been well maintained through the years."

Pray said although the car was once listed for sale at \$110,000, it was purchased at auction for considerably less, although he would not disclose the sale amount. Four other bidders attempted to buy the car but Pray said community members got lucky.

"We were hoping for a miracle and hoping there wouldn't be too many people interested in it and it was our luck, they

weren't," said Pray.

That hasn't always been the case. In the mid-1980s Pray said he and others formed a community group called "Friends of the Dolson," committed to bringing the car back to Charlotte. But Pray said it sold for much more than residents had secured to buy it – and they lost out on the historic gem.

Local businesswoman and resident Christie Dutcher remembered the effort. She came out on Aug. 1 to see the car's arrival and said it's been a long process.

"Every time they raised more money, the price of the car went higher," said Dutcher, of previous attempts. "This is just a study in determination and perseverance."

Pray said he now hopes the car can be used to promote the community. He said those responsible for it hope to form a trust or other entity that will en-

sure the car stays in Charlotte.

"We can use this to promote the community because it's fairly unique," he explained. "I think it's part of the community's history."

Charlotte Mayor Dee Smith agreed. He attended the arrival as well and had high hopes for the historic car.

"I think it will bring a lot of people into the community just to see it," he said. "I hope it will bring a lot of notoriety."

Small Business Sales Rise 6.8 Percent

NEW YORK (AP) – Spending at small businesses rose in August, beating July's growth rate and outshining sales at retailers overall, according to a survey released last week by MasterCard and Wells Fargo & Co.

Sales of merchandise and food for smaller retailers rose 6.8 percent in August compared with the same month last year, beating July's 6 percent year-over-year increase, but down from June's 8 percent growth.

Over the past three months, small business sales have risen 6.9 percent compared with the same period in 2011 and for the year-to-date they are up 8 percent, according to the report.

Excluding gasoline, small business retail sales rose 6.4 percent. None of the report's figures include sales of cars and light trucks.

"There are a couple of relatively positive signs here," Michael McNamara, the head of SpendingPulse, MasterCard's retail sales data service.

"High-tier categories like jewelry are struggling, but restaurants are doing all right and back-to-school sales are holding up pretty well."

The report defines small retail-

ers, which range from restaurants to hardware and grocery stores, as having annual sales of less than \$35 million and fewer than 200 employees.

Total retail sales, including those at larger stores, rose 5.1 percent last month.

McNamara noted that the sales growth gap between small retailers and retailers overall appears to have shrunk. In August, small

retailers outperformed retailers overall by just 1.7 percentage points, down from 4.6 percentage points in June.

Meanwhile, the government said last week that August retail sales rose for the second straight month, as consumers paid higher gas prices and bought more cars and trucks.

The reports are compiled from different sources of information.

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