

# Continental Recognizes Supplier for Driving Simulator

by Jennifer Knightstep

Last week, Continental Automotive in Auburn Hills recognized Ann Arbor-based Mechanical Simulation Corporation with its 2012 Award for Appreciation for Exceptional Engineering Support.

The award was presented to Mechanical Simulation for its development of an interactive driving simulator used to demonstrate Continental's Emergency Steering Assist technologies at the 2011 Enhanced Safety Vehicles Conference in Washington, D.C.

Mechanical Simulation built the driving simulator using a BMW 550i sedan, along with special software to make the simulation as realistic as possible.

The simulator takes conference-goers on a test drive through an interactive course, one with plenty of emergency steering opportunities to steer through. It's much safer than an

actual crash-course, but just as effective at demonstrating the driver experience and the safety benefits of Continental's Emergency Steering Assist feature.

David Agnew, head of Continental's Advanced Engineering for Chassis & Safety North America, praised the team at Mechanical Simulation, saying,

"We received a lot of positive feedback on the safety technology as well as the simulation concept."

"The team at Mechanical Simulation was instrumental in helping us execute the overall project."

This isn't the first time Mechanical Simulation has been recognized for its driving simulation achievements.

Since the company was established in 1996, it has appeared on best-of lists across the globe for its car, truck, and motorcycle simulations.



Continental Automotive demonstrates its Emergency Steering Assist technologies with an interactive driving simulator developed by Mechanical Simulation Corp.

# Ford's Search for Innovative Ideas Pays Off in Reuters Praise

Ford Motor Co.'s technology development efforts have been recognized on the Thomson Reuters Top 100 Global Innovators List.

Ford's recent enhancements to spur employee innovation have resulted in a 60 percent increase in invention submissions.

In fact, Ford's Employee Patent Incentive Awards program has been included among earned memberships to TechShop Detroit. Ford has been granted nearly 500 patents on hybrid electric vehicle technology.

"Developing creative solutions to real problems in mobility and manufacturing has always been a core of the Ford philosophy and today we are encouraging innovation more than ever," says Bill Coughlin, CEO, Ford Global Technologies.

"We're in an increasingly competitive marketplace and embracing the challenge to continuously improve quality, safety, energy efficiency and technology."

"Enhancements to programs like the Employee Patent Incentive Awards encourage our team members to think outside the box for new solutions."

Invention submissions are up 60 percent since the launch of the enhanced invention incentives to TechShop as an early award.

Getting onto the Top 100 Global Innovators list takes a major investment in developing intellectual property, and Ford engineers and researchers have come through, say company officials.

The search for ever-improving fuel efficiency has also yielded more than 25 patent applications for the controls for Auto Start-Stop and 125 for EcoBoost engine technology alone.

Innovation goes beyond the engine compartment to include human-machine interfaces like the innovative SmartGauge instrument cluster, the EcoGuide driver coaching system and the new EV+ system on Ford electrified vehicles.

"From the Model T and the moving assembly line to the latest C-MAX Energi and Fusion Energi plug-in hybrids, Ford has

# Millennials Moving Fast at GM Brownstown Battery Plant

A new generation of young, tech-savvy workers are prominently represented at General Motors' Brownstown Battery Assembly plant, one of the industry's newest and most high-tech facilities.

Nearly half of the plant's workforce (45 percent) are part of the technically plugged in, environmentally-conscious generation known as millennials, or Gen Y (young adults 24-31 years old).

Millennials' high rate of representation is a great fit for the Michigan downriver plant, which assembles lithium-ion batteries for a number of GM's electric vehicles, including the Chevrolet Volt, Holden Volt, Opel Ampera and the upcoming Cadillac ELR extended-range electric vehicles.

As the only U.S. facility that mass-produces batteries for extended-range electric vehicles, Brownstone Battery Assembly, which is part of a wholly owned subsidiary called GM Subsystems Manufacturing LLC, provides the kind of state-of-the-art, continually challenging jobs that keep workers from this generation engaged and enthusiastic, GM officials say.

Gen Y workers at Brownstown weren't even born when their boss, Plant Manager Jeff Lamarche started his first job at a GM facility in 1981, but Lamarche couldn't be more confident in their skills

and capabilities.

"They're not just coming to work here expecting to do the same job for the next 30 years," he said. "They want variety and certainly do live up to the description of their generation in that they're more portable."

"They want to do a lot of different things and adapt well to different jobs and different parts of the plant. They're pretty motivated on how they can move up."

Millennials are forward-looking and exude a lot of confidence, but are understandably wary about the uncertainties of the current economic climate, and are attracted to opportunities that offer them a chance for growth and development, according to Scratch, a unit of Viacom.

Valerie Myaard would tend to agree. The 24-year-old started as a team member at the plant in 2010 and was advanced to Team Leader in less than a year. She is the youngest employee at Brownstown.

"My goal is to keep moving up," she said. "I don't do well sitting. I like challenges."

Another Millennial at Brownstown on the fast track is Shannon Pearson, 28, who also started at the plant in 2010.

Taking full advantage of the career advancement opportunities available to her, Pearson ad-



GM Team Leader Valerie Myaard (center) chats with colleagues.

vanced to become a Team Leader on the module final line, where she managed a team assembling and testing battery sub-sections.

True to her generation, Pearson is not one to let the grass grow under her feet. She is now advancing toward a management position in the Material Department.

"I've never had a job where I've moved up so fast," she said. "You don't normally see that level of transition in such a short period of time, so for me it's been really beneficial."

Just as these workers are helping GM stride into the future, GM stands solidly behind their Gen Y

team members.

"All of GM is committed to connecting with the millennial generation, as employees and consumers," said GM North America President Mark Reuss.

"We must embrace a culture that gets behind this generation and positions them to lead us into the future."

"This plant is just one example of our young workers making a meaningful contribution together with managers who mentor them and value their perspective."

# Winter Tires Make a Difference in Snow, Ice

A recent survey by the Goodyear Tire Company revealed that drivers who don't prepare properly for winter driving can create fear for others.

The study also showed that more than 75 percent of drivers believe winter tires make a difference.

The survey of drivers in major cold-weather markets conducted by The Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company showed that many drivers fail to equip and prepare their vehicles for winter, or even to slow down when driving.

Too few drivers, the survey says, take basic precautionary measures ahead of the season, such as getting their engine checked or switching to winter tires.

According to the data, more than 75 percent believe winter tires make a difference in challenging winter weather, yet 58 percent of those in cold-weather areas don't use winter tires. These habits and perceptions are the same across drivers who have and haven't been involved in any winter accidents.

"Simple things, such as equipping your car with a set of winter tires, can make the difference in challenging winter driving conditions," said Brandy Gadd, marketing manager for Goodyear.

"A set of superior-performing

winter tires helps provide consumers with the superior traction they need to confidently drive in ever-changing winter conditions."

More than seven in ten (73 percent) respondents say they drive just as much in the winter, if not more often, than in other seasons, and 19 percent also claim they don't drive any slower, even with often slippery road conditions.

During the winter months, this

failure to prepare for changing winter weather could be the reason more than half of them (51 percent) actually fear other drivers more than the icy weather conditions.

In Quebec, where winter tires have been mandatory for drivers for the past five years, a 2011 study by the Ministry of Transport of Quebec has shown that winter tires make an impact on improving road safety.

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