

Team Prefix Contributes to Local Economy with Made in USA Mindset

by Irena Granaas

Prefix Corporation took the wraps off a modified 2008 Dodge Viper SRT-10 March 14 at a media event announcing Prefix's participation in this year's One Lap of America motorsports event.

The purpose of the event was not just to present a beautiful race car with a show-quality finish done by Prefix, but to announce the intention of Team Prefix/Forge Ahead USA to use the eight-day motorsports competition to encourage Americans to buy products made in the USA.

"The One Lap of America is a great way to share the importance of the Forge Ahead USA campaign," explained Kim Zeile, owner of Prefix Corporation, the team's title sponsor. "There is definitely a renewed interest in buying American-made products, so the timing has never been better for us to bring attention to American companies and the importance of recycling dollars back into our economy."

Zeile is passionate about the subject and said that he was struck by a statistic he heard recently that, if every American household would just spend three or four dollars on American-made products, it could put over 10,000 Americans back to work.

"That's what Forge Ahead America is all about. It's about promoting American manufacturing – it's about education, and letting people know no govern-

ment stimulus package is going to save them. It's a team effort. If everybody does just a little bit (it makes a difference). Sure it's the global economy, but we can make a difference, and this is one way we can do it," said Zeile.

Prefix, which opened its doors last August in a former Kmart location on Joselyn Road, was awarded the contract to produce its show-quality paint finish through its 100-percent manual process for the 2013 SRT Viper.

Team Prefix, a.k.a, Steve Loudin, owner of the Viper SRT-10, and co-driver Tom Drewer were on hand for the unveiling of the race car.

Drewer liked the impressive panel work by Prefix craftsmen.

"In all my years of racing I've never seen a race car turned out as beautifully as this one," he commented.

The 2013 Tire Rack One Lap of America, the modern version of the famous Cannonball Run, will be held May 4 to May 11.

Organized by the same group of enthusiasts who pioneered the original event, today's One Lap has events taking place on professional race tracks.

Drewer explained that the One Lap is as much of an endurance contest as it is a race, with drivers literally living in their car for days on end, yet, "The camaraderie is staggering."

Drewer, who hails from Australia, added, "I'm real proud to be representing this American company for Team Forge Ahead



Ralph Gilles, Chrysler SRT Motorsports, Prefix Owner Kim Zeile and Chrysler Program Manager Eric Zeile

and Prefix. The drive, determination and passion of Americans is what led me to this country. The opportunities here are second to none."

Drewer said with the SRT-10's 700 hp, 8.4-liter V10, "We've got the weapon this year. It's going to be a tough competition, but we've got added motivation and we're going to give it everything we've got."

"This Forge Ahead USA mes-

sage is much bigger than putting an American-made sticker on a product," said Zeile. "It's a national movement that pulls together manufacturing businesses, employees, communities, industry groups, and consumers. It's a true, national team effort! The future of our economy depends on all of us making the decision to buy American whenever possible."

Additional sponsors include:

Whelen Engineering, Archer Racing, Forgeline Wheels, American Racing Headers, Arrow Racing, Tricel Corporation, K&N Engineering, CORSA Performance, PartsRack, Thule, & Jason Industries.

To follow team Forge Ahead USA, fans can "like" their team's Facebook page to see hourly updates, photos and video from the 2013 One Lap of America, at facebook.com/TeamForgeAheadUSA.

Local Firm Among Four Recognized By GM For Exceeding Expectations

General Motors recognized 83 of its best global automotive suppliers last week during its 21st annual Supplier of the Year awards ceremony at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit.

"Suppliers play a critical role in our business and we're thrilled to recognize those we consider to be world-class," said Grace Lieblein, GM vice president, Global Purchasing and Supply Chain.

"Each winning company consistently exceeded our expectations by being innovative, delivering high-quality products and services on time and by creating outstanding value."

The Supplier of the Year award is given to less than 1 percent of GM's approximately 18,500 suppliers around the world. The winners are recognized for delivering innovative technology, superior quality, timely crisis management and competitive, total-enterprise cost solutions.

In addition to the Supplier of the Year awards, GM introduced a new honor called the Overdrive award. Four companies received the award, which recognizes suppliers who have undertaken extraordinary initiatives that drove exceptional results for GM's business.

"The Overdrive Award recognizes those world-class companies that have truly gone above and beyond," Lieblein said. "They have not only met the demands of our business, they have also demonstrated through their actions a great commitment to their communities."

The companies have headquarters in 17 countries with regional manufacturing and support services all over the world. Of the 83 recipients, five are certified diverse suppliers and 46 are repeat winners from last year. Ideal Contracting of Detroit

was one of the Overdrive winners. Robert Kohut, director of Estimate – New Business for Ideal Contracting, said it was a great honor to be named one of the four Overdrive Award winners by GM.

"We heard that we won one of the four Overdrive winners on March 13, the day the awards were given out," Kohut said. "We knew we were going to receive an award for being a top supplier but we didn't know we would get this award."

In fact, Kohut said, when the GM speaker was describing what the Overdrive Award was, Dan Kovocho, an Ideal vice president, said that the company should try to win one of those awards in the future. When GM announced that Ideal was one of the four Overdrive winners, everyone at Ideal was stunned. They had no idea that they won the award.

"It was very humbling to win the Overdrive Award," Kohut said. "We are now one of four companies out of 18,000 GM suppliers to have won this award. I must say it's nice to be recognized for the hard work we've done and be told that we've done a great job for the company."

Ideal is a general contractor, Kohut said. It has a "blanket order" contract with GM to manage 43 million square feet of GM's buildings.

"We do anything from hanging a door to building a factory," Kohut said. "We even have people at facilities, including the Tech Center to make repairs and fix things. Most of the work we do is in Southeast Michigan."

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