

Tech Center News

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GM Quality Best Overall, Says JD Power Survey

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Silverado at a time when all the factors such as lifecycle were working in their favor.

"But as Ford goes forward, I believe they will do better. And tech systems will be more similar as people start to do what they know works."

Ford Quality Communications Manager Wes Sherwood said in an exclusive interview that Ford was first to face the issue of hi-tech in cars and that the next iteration of My Ford Touch will be much better than the current system.

"We've also done surveys of our buyers," Sherwood said. "Our information shows that buyers with My Ford Touch are happier than buyers without the system."

"This situation is like when someone has used a calculator his whole life. He might have some problems when he switches to Excel because he has to learn how to use the system. But he won't go back to a calculator, he just wants Excel to get better."

Macomb County Fireworks Set

Residents of Warren and Macomb County will have several chances to see fireworks displays.

On Tuesday, June 25, the city of Center Line is having a show at its Memorial Park, 25355 Lawrence in Center Line. The show starts at 10 p.m.

The Stars and Stripes Festival in Sterling Heights will have a display at Freedom Hill Park starting at around 10 p.m. on Sunday, June 30. There will be a fireworks show at Lake St. Clair Metropark in Harrison Township on July 2, at 10 p.m.

Cadillac China Plant Targets Demand for Luxury Autos

Starting production of the XTS earlier this year showed GM's intention to lay down deep roots in China for Cadillac, said Dan Akerson.

Speaking last week at the groundbreaking of a new plant in China, the General Motors CEO said GM made a long-term commitment to China when the company established its first facilities in Shanghai more than 15 years ago.

The new plant is where GM will build Cadillac models for the Chinese market.

"To succeed in China," Akerson said, "we need to continue to grow our design, engineering, manufacturing and dealer network to meet the needs of local consumers."

"The plant we are breaking ground for today is especially important to the growth of our Cadillac brand, which competes in one of the market's fastest-growing segments."

"I am here to pledge the support of the entire GM organization to ensure that we are successful."

"There is a proverb that says that the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago and the second best time is now. This perfectly captures the opportunity we see for Cadillac in China."

The car is off to a very fast start, he said, adding that the automaker is pleased with consumers' response to it and to the refreshed SRX, the top seller in China. GM's drive to grow Cadillac in China does not end there, as the groundbreaking makes clear.

Akerson said by 2020, the Chinese vehicle market could reach 30 million units, and GM expects that more luxury cars will be sold there than anywhere else in the world - as many as 3 million.

"Our new plant underpins our plan to introduce a new Cadillac

model in China every year through 2016 and achieve a 10 percent share of the luxury market by 2020," Akerson said.

"Our confidence is high because we have such a strong and experienced SGM (Shanghai General Motors) team, great partners, fully dedicated Cadillac dealers, and the valuable support of the Shanghai government."

Mike Wall, director of automotive analysis for IHS Automotive, said that Cadillac's moves in China make sense.

"This is indicative of Cadillac's and GM's efforts to globalize their production base and the Cadillac brand," Wall said. "And China is a good market for GM to do that."

The company was an early adopter in terms of getting into the Chinese market along with Volkswagen. The Chinese are open to the GM brand."

And getting there early has paid off for GM, Wall said. Buick is an extremely popular brand there and GM has tailored the Buicks it manufactures there to the Chinese market, where it is considered a luxury brand.

By adding Cadillac to the mix, GM will be better able to take advantage of China's growing luxury vehicle population, Wall said.

And GM needs to do this as part of its efforts to globalize the Cadillac brand.

"Cadillac is doing much better recently in the North American market," Wall said.

"Look at Lincoln. That brand has just started to work to push itself here. Cadillac is ahead of them here."

"The next step for Cadillac is to go global. Look at BMW or Audi. They are true global luxury brands that can drive vehicle sales across multiple markets. Cadillac needs now to be international and one place they can do

that is in China."

As to building a new factory in China, Wall said that's now how it's done. OEMs are building facilities where they sell.

"People don't have to worry about cars built in China being sold here and putting Americans out of work," Wall said. "And they don't have to worry about money being taken from North America being used to build factories in China."

The factory being built is being funded from GM's joint ventures with the Chinese company SAIC Motor Corporation.

Gerald Johnson Named GM's VP, Manufacturing

GM has appointed Gerald Johnson as North America Manufacturing vice president, effective July 1.

Johnson will lead a team of more than 74,000 employees who work in 56 facilities including assembly, stamping, powertrain and component operations in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

"Gerald's proven leadership, experience and passion for product quality will serve him well in this role," said Tim Lee, GM vice president, Global Manufacturing and president, GM International Operations.

"He leads by example as a mentor and strong communicator, engaging his full team to ensure we build only the best for our customers."

Johnson's most recent role was executive director of Global Program Quality and Launch, where he led several key quality initiatives to improve global

Ultimately, a successful Cadillac operation in China means more profits heading to North America, Wall said.

And right now, China is just about the hottest car market in the world.

There is a potential for selling 30 million new vehicles a year there, he said, adding that GM has to be there.

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Gerald Johnson

product launches. His 33-year GM career includes many leadership positions in Labor Relations and Manufacturing, including an overseas assignment in Zurich.

Johnson holds a bachelor's degree in Industrial Administration from Kettering University and a master's degree in Manufacturing Operations from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

He succeeds Diana Tremblay, who recently was named vice president of GM's new Global Business Services group.

Former GM Design VP Cherry Earns Lifetime Design Achievement Award

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the Ford estate on Sunday.

All proceeds from the show go to benefit the Detroit Institute of Ophthalmology (DIO).

Lightbody said that the final aim is to raise money for the DIO's 2013 Research Congress, which will take place between Sept. 16-18 at The Henry Hotel in Dearborn.

Titled, "The Eye, The Brain & The Auto," this year's congress is dedicated to improving the understanding of the relationship between vision and the safe op-

eration of motorized vehicles, in an attempt to reduce the number of highway fatalities.

At this event, the DIO brings together more than 30 authorities from within the auto industry, as well as from the visual research world.

Lightbody said they are still in the process of determining how much money was raised over the weekend, but the EyesOn volunteers "work hard to keep costs down so that the DIO receives as much money for its projects as possible."

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