

FCA to Add 6,500 Jobs, Invest \$4.5B in Michigan

by Jim Stickford

Investment in the Detroit area just took a huge leap forward.

FCA is moving ahead with plans to invest \$4.5 billion in five of its existing Michigan plants, and to work with the city of Detroit and state of Michigan on building a new assembly plant within Detroit city limits.

The move would increase capacity to meet growing demand for its Jeep and Ram brands, including production of two new Jeep-branded white space products, as well as electrified models. The proposed projects would create nearly 6,500 new jobs, said FCA spokeswoman Jodi Tinson. The FCA investment at the Warren, Mich., Truck plant – to retool for production of the new Jeep Wagoneer and Grand Wagoneer, announced in 2017, along with their electrified counterparts – would increase to \$1.5 billion, Tinson said. Production is expected to launch in early 2021.

In addition to the new Jeep models, the Warren plant would continue building the Ram 1500 Classic, which is being extended to meet market demand. It is expected that 1,400 new jobs would be added, Tinson said.

As a result of this investment, production of the new Ram Heavy Duty will continue at its current location in Saltillo, Mexico.

To support the additional pro-

duction, the company's Warren Stamping and Sterling Stamping (Sterling Heights, Mich.) plants would receive investments of \$245 million and \$160 million, respectively, with Sterling Stamping expected to add more than 80 new jobs, Tinson said. This investment is part of the company's capital spending plan presented in June 2018.

Stephanie Brinley, principal analyst for IHS Markit, said that the announcement made on Feb. 26 was no doubt in the works for a couple of years.

The plant actions detailed in FCA's announcement represent the next steps in a U.S. manufacturing realignment that FCA began in 2016, Tinson said.

"I wouldn't put too much thought into the timing of the an-

nouncement," Brinley said. "They will be starting construction in a few months and that's hard to hide. This plan confirms what people have been speculating and talking about for a few years. This gives a framework to the building of the Jeep Wagoneer and the three-row Grand Cherokee."

In response to a shift in consumer demand toward SUVs and trucks, the company discontinued compact car production and retooled plants in Illinois, Ohio and Michigan to make full use of available capacity to expand the Jeep and Ram brands, Tinson said.

"Three years ago," said FCA CEO Mike Manley, "FCA set a



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Warren Truck is one of the facilities that FCA is retooling.



Alan Batey

GM's Batey Retiring After 40 Years

Alan S. Batey, GM's executive vice president and president, North America, has elected to retire after 40 years with the company.

Barry Engle, currently executive vice president and president of GM International, will succeed Batey in leading North America and will maintain his current responsibilities for GM's operations in South America, said GM spokesman Pat Morrissey.

With this role, Engle is named

to the new position of executive vice president and president, the Americas. Engle's appointment is effective April 1. He will report to GM Chairman and CEO Mary Barra. Batey will remain on as an advisor to Engle to assist in a smooth transition.

Julian Blissett, currently SAIC-GM executive vice president in China, is named senior vice president, International Operations. Blissett will have responsibility for GM's operations outside of

the Americas and China. Blissett will also report to Barra.

SAIC-GM is a joint venture between General Motors Company and SAIC Motor that manufactures and sells Buick, Chevrolet and Cadillac brand automobiles in mainland China.

"As our company continues to streamline operations, simplify our systems and refine our global go-to-market strategies," said

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GM Extends Hamtramck to 2020

DETROIT (AP) – General Motors is extending the life of its only Detroit factory until early next year.

The plant on the border of Detroit and the hamlet of Hamtramck was to stop making vehicles as of June 1. But the company now says production of the Chevrolet Impala and Cadillac CT6 will continue into January of 2020.

The factory is one of five that GM plans to shutter as part of a restructuring to cut costs and reduce underused plants.

In all, GM is shedding about 6,000 factory jobs and another 8,000 salaried positions.

The company says the plant will stay open as it produces a high-performance version of the CT6 and vehicles with its "Super Cruise" advanced driver assist system.

But the plant is likely to close early next year.

GM announced the restructuring plans in November. In addition to the Detroit plant, the company plans to stop making cars and transmissions at factories in

Lordstown, Ohio; Oshawa, Ontario; Warren; and near Baltimore. The company says it has 2,700 jobs available for factory workers at other U.S. plants.

Technically, the company can't close the plants without negotiating with the United Auto Workers union, and many workers are hoping their factories can be saved in contract talks that start this summer. But GM says it has too much capacity to build cars as the U.S. market has shifted

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Ford is using a Miami florist shop to test self-driving technology.

Ford Giving Self-Driving Tech Real-World Tests

Sometimes you can welcome new technology with flowers. Just ask Romina Orozco-Encio and her family.

When they arrived in the United States almost three decades ago, her parents had to quickly figure out how to make a life for their family. So they dipped into their history and opened a flower shop like Romina's grandfather had in their native country of Argentina.

For almost 30 years, she and her family have steered Abbott Florist through Miami's ever-shifting landscape, tackling the challenge of running a local business amidst a sea of large corporations, intense competition and evolving customer habits, said Alexander Buznego, Miami market manager in Ford Autonomous Vehicles.

Now, with the advent of self-driving vehicles, they've taken a step into the future and, along with other shop owners, started working with Buznego to improve deliveries.

"To test out the opportunity, we first spent time with Romina and her fellow business owners to understand what we needed to build to ensure our self-driving delivery service could seamlessly integrate with their operations," Buznego said.

"We needed to know whether they already had digital ordering capability or whether we had to build it for them. For our first trial, we designed an easy-to-use app for shops to request a test vehicle when they needed to make a delivery."

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General Motors is keeping open its Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly Plant an additional eight months.

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Local Author to Speak at Warren Library

Local author Tom Stanton will talk about his latest book, "Terror in the City of Champions" on Thursday, March 28, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., at the Miller branch of the Warren Library.

Warren librarian Amy Moss said the presentation will be held in conference room A, located in the Warren Community Center, between 14 Mile Road and Chicago, west of Mound.

Moss said the story in Stanton's book takes place in Detroit during the mid-1930s. The plot describes how the secretive, Klan-like Black Legion was executing a wicked plan of terror, murdering enemies, flogging associates, and contemplating armed rebellion.

The Legion, he writes, boasted tens of thousands of members across the Midwest, among them politicians and prominent citizens – even, possibly, a beloved athlete.

To reserve a spot at the talk, Moss said people should call 586-751-5377.

FCA Creating 6,500 Jobs, Investing in State

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course to grow our profitability based on the strength of the Jeep and Ram brands by realigning our U.S. manufacturing operations. This announcement represents the next step in that strategy.

"It allows Jeep to enter two white space segments that offer significant margin opportunities and will enable new electrified Jeep products, including at least four plug-in hybrid vehicles and the flexibility to produce fully battery-electric vehicles."

The city of Detroit has 60 days to meet the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding, which requires the acquisition of property critical to the execution of the Mack project, Tinson said. The additional investments are subject to the successful negotiation and final approval of development packages with the state and other local governments.

Under current plans, FCA would invest \$1.6 billion to convert the two plants that the Mack Avenue Engine Complex comprises into the future assembly site for the next-generation Jeep Grand Cherokee, as well as a new three-row full-size Jeep SUV and plug-in hybrid (PHEV) models, adding 3,850 new jobs to support production, Tinson said.

The company, said Manley, intends to start construction of the new Detroit facility by the end of the second quarter of 2019, with the first three-row vehicles expected to roll off the line by the end of 2020 – followed by the new Grand Cherokee in the first half of 2021.

Additionally, the Jefferson North Assembly Plant would receive an investment of \$900 million to retool and modernize the facility to build the Dodge Du-

rango and next-generation Jeep Grand Cherokee. FCA expects to create 1,100 new jobs at Jefferson North, Tinson said.

The reborn Mack facility would be the first new assembly plant to be built in the city of Detroit in nearly three decades. In 1991, Chrysler's Jefferson North became the last new assembly plant built in the city. When complete, Mack would join Jefferson North as the only automotive assembly plants to be located completely within the city limits of Detroit.

The Pentastar engines – the 3.6-, 3.2- and 3.0-liter – currently built at Mack I would be relocated to the Dundee, Mich., Engine Plant as part of a \$119 million investment. Pentastar production at Mack I would end by the third quarter 2019. Mack II has been idle since it ceased production of the 3.7-liter V6 in September 2012.

Brinley said that it was important to note that part of this investment will allow FCA to build EV and hybrid engines. Before he died, CEO Sergio Marchionne said that he was "agnostic" about this technology. He wasn't for it or against it, but he needed to be convinced that it could be profitable.

"This part of the announcement shows that EV and hybrid technology is inevitable," Brinley said.

She also said that FCA has cut back one shift in the Belvidere (Ill.) plant that makes the Cherokee.

Brinley said that the newly announced plans are part of a larger plan FCA announced in June of 2016. The company said then that it would stop making the Dodge Dart and the Chrysler 200.

The Belvidere plant where the Dart was made, the 2016 announcement stated, would be converted to making the new Cherokee and Sterling Heights Assembly would make Ram trucks.

"When FCA made that announcement, the company was basically playing to its strengths," Brinley said. "It was doing very well with trucks and SUVs. The move wasn't so much anticipating a change in consumer tastes so much as it was concentrating on what the company did best.

"I don't think anyone anticipated just how much consumer preferences for trucks and SUVs would grow. Since then, Ford and GM have made similar announcements."

Since 2016, FCA has realigned production at four plants in Illinois, Ohio and Michigan to increase capacity for the Jeep Cherokee, Jeep Wrangler and Ram 1500 light-duty truck, and created additional manufactur-

ing capacity for the Jeep Gladiator in Ohio, Tinson said.

The investments included:

- \$350 million in the Belvidere plant to produce the Jeep Cherokee, which moved from Toledo, Ohio, in 2017. More than 300 new jobs were added to support production, which launched in June 2017.

- \$700 million in the Toledo Assembly Complex to retool the North plant to produce the next-generation Jeep Wrangler. Approximately 700 new jobs were added to support production, which began in December 2017.

- \$1.48 billion in the Sterling Heights Assembly Plant to build the next-generation Ram 1500 truck, adding more than 700 new jobs. Production of the new truck began in March 2018. Production of the Ram 1500 Classic continues at Warren Truck Assembly.

- \$273 million in the south plant of the Toledo Assembly Complex to prepare the facility to produce the new Jeep Gladiator. The new truck is scheduled to launch in the first half of 2019.

In total, FCA has committed to invest nearly \$14.5 billion in its United States manufacturing operations, creating nearly 30,000 new jobs since June 2009, Tinson said.

FCA Sees Slight February Sales Decline

FCA reported that the Jeep Cherokee set an all-time February sales record, despite another month of bitter weather across key selling regions for the brand.

The Ram brand scored another record month as well, on the back of award-winning products in the hot light-duty and heavy-duty markets.

Following 11 straight months of year-over-year sales increases, the company's overall U.S. February sales retreated 2 percent to 162,036 vehicles in a soft market, compared with sales of 165,903 vehicles in February 2018, said FCA spokesman Jeff Bennett.

The Jeep brand is returning to a more "normal" sales cadence after benefiting from both the new and old Wrangler coming off

the production lines this time last year, Bennett said.

"The overall industry is starting off slower due in part to weather, the U.S. government shutdown and concern over tax refunds," U.S. head of Sales Reid Bigland said. "We still see a strong, stable economy and anticipate any lost winter sales will be made up in the spring. For us, the Ram brand was the standout in February, and Jeep Cherokee set a February record as well."

The Jeep Cherokee defied the general sales trend, with a 31 percent sales improvement compared with the same time last year, Bennett said. The model sold 16,020 in 2019 compared with 12,225 in 2018.

Sales for the Grand Cherokee

showed a slight 3 percent increase – 18,009 compared with 17,468, while the Compass saw a 25 percent decline – 12,063 this year compared to 16,026 last year.

Ram pickup trucks saw a 25 percent increase – 39,950 versus 33,299, Bennett said. On the other hand, Chrysler Pacifica sales dropped 32 percent, going from 11,482 in February of 2018 to 7,854 this year.

Dodge Durango sales were good this February, Bennett said. Going up by 17 percent, with sales of 6,105.

Dodge did see a drop in its muscle car segment, with sales of the Charger dropping 13 percent – 6,547, and sales of the Challenger dropping to 3,639, a 40 percent decline.

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Macomb County Meals on Wheels Fundraiser Starts

The Macomb County Meals on Wheels program, an initiative within Macomb Community Action's Office of Senior Services, has begun its annual March for Meals campaign and is actively seeking volunteers and donations to help with the delivery of hot meals to Macomb County seniors.

During the month of March, Meals on Wheels programs across the country participate in the March for Meals campaign to raise public awareness of senior hunger, raise funds to support Meals on Wheels services and to recruit volunteers.

Thinking outside of the box, the Macomb County Office of Senior Services decided to offer the option of purchasing a March for Meals campaign T-shirt as a way for the public to make a donation, said Macomb spokeswoman Roneeka Pleasant-Brown. The initial fundraiser was a success and it's now in its third year.

The March for Meals T-shirts will be available March 4-29 for \$20 and can be purchased at customink.com/fundraising/ MCA-MarchForMeals.

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MCC Program Shows STEM Future to Girl Scouts

by Jim Stickford

Girls Scouts from Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties got a taste of science at a Feb. 23 gathering at Macomb Community College (MCC).

The Girl Scouts who attended the event participated in two programs designed to promote STEM interest.

Approximately 70 Girl Scouts in grades four through 12 from Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties converged on Macomb Community College for Girl Scouts Engineering Day.

Scouts and their parents learned about a variety of STEM careers and how they could pursue those opportunities, said Sean Patrick, manager of Media Relations for MCC.

The scouts also learned some engineering concepts through hands-on activities that included building and racing balloon-powered race cars. They also had the opportunity to build roller coasters.

The event was sponsored by

Macomb Community College's Center for Advanced Automotive Technology, Oakland University School of Engineering and Computer Science, STEM Genius and the Society of Women Engineers Detroit.

"This event is put on by the Girl Scouts," Patrick said. "This is the first year MCC has played host and sponsor to this event."

MCC provided the facilities and the teachers, who volunteered their time, and the Girl Scouts provided the participants, Patrick said.

The younger girls were given balloons and toy car parts.

After receiving some lessons on basic engineering principles, they took all the toy car parts and built a balloon-powered race car, Patrick said.

The older girls were taught basic engineering principles useful in the construction of a roller coaster.

They were then able to build a miniature roller coaster using plastic parts provided by MCC teachers.



Area Girl Scouts recently were able to put engineering principles to use at a special MCC STEM event.

"This wasn't a competition," Patrick said. "So there's no prize for building the fastest race car or best roller coaster."

"Rather, the girls were able to put the lessons they learned during the day into action by building cars and roller coasters."

"Some of the construction was rather elaborate." (See photo.)

Girl Scout officials contacted the college to ask them to host the 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. event.

Patrick said that the folks at MCC were happy to donate their time for such a worthy cause.

More Pedestrian Fatalities Being Reported

DETROIT (AP) – The number of pedestrians killed on U.S. roads last year was the highest in 28 years, according to a report from a safety organization.

Using data reported by states, the Governors Highway Safety Association estimates that 6,227 pedestrians were killed last year. That's up 4 percent from 2017 and 35 percent since 2008.

The association blames the increase on factors that include distracted or impaired drivers, more people walking to work, and more SUVs on the road, which cause more severe injuries in collisions with people.

Most deaths happen on local roads at night and away from intersections, and it called for safer road crossings. Night crashes accounted for more than 90 percent of the increased deaths in the last 10 years.

While there's progress reducing fatalities, in the past decade, pedestrian deaths have risen 35 percent, Jonathan Adkins, the association's executive director.

40-Year GM Veteran Batey Retiring from Company

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Barra, "I see Barry as the perfect leader to continue our transformation in each of these markets."

"Alan and his team have achieved record financial performance and created a customer-focused foundation, and we greatly appreciate what he has contributed to GM over his almost 40 years of service across the globe."

Batey has been in his current position since 2014 and has led Global Chevrolet since July 2013. He also served as GM vice president, U.S. Sales and Service and interim GM chief marketing officer from 2012 to 2013 and vice president, U.S. Chevrolet Sales and Service, from 2010 to 2012.

A native of the United Kingdom, Batey began his General Motors career in 1979.

Throughout his career he has held several senior management positions of increasing responsibility for GM in the United Kingdom, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, Germany, Korea and Australia.

Engle joined GM as executive vice president and president, GM South America, in September 2015. In October 2017, it was announced that his duties would expand to include all operations outside North America and China.

Engle has lived and worked around the globe, running businesses in Latin America, Europe and Asia, as well as the U.S. and Canada.

His automotive experience includes 13 years with Ford Motor Company before going on to become the president and CEO of New Holland Agricultural Equipment, the CEO of THINK (an EV start-up) and the CEO of Agility Fuel Systems (a private equity-backed Tier I supplier). Engle also has automotive retail experience, having been a Chrysler Plymouth Jeep dealer.

Blissett has been executive vice president of SAIC-GM since 2014. Prior to that, he held a vari-

ety of management positions in GM's International Operations, including vice president of New Business Development and Alliances from 2011 to 2014 and executive director of Manufacturing Engineering from 2010 to 2011.

He began his career with GM as Central Engineering manager for Opel Polska.

Prior to joining GM, Blissett worked for Nissan Motor Manufacturing U.K. Ltd. for eight years in manufacturing engineering and production leadership in the U.K. and Japan.

Blissett holds a bachelor's degree in engineering and business studies from Sheffield Hallam University in the U.K. and is a Chartered Engineer of the Institute of Electrical Engineers.

GM to Keep Open Hamtramck Plant For Eight Months

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dramatically to SUVs, CUVs and trucks.

Union leaders welcomed the extension for the Detroit plant and promised to fight the other closures.

"Let me reiterate that the UAW will leave no stone unturned in seeking to keep your plants open, and we hope today's news brings a measure of hope as we continue that important work," UAW President Gary Jones said in a statement to employees Feb. 22.

GM spokesman Dan Flores said about 700 hourly workers remain at the Detroit plant, down from 1,348 who worked there in November.

Most of those laid off have been placed at other factories, Flores said.

The majority of the workers who transferred to new positions have gone to General Motor's pickup truck assembly plant in Flint.

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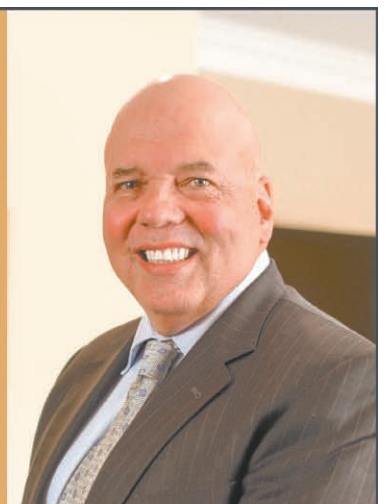
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Ford Testing Self-Driving Tech in Miami

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"Using our app, they were able to make deliveries on demand for items that needed to be delivered right away, or they could schedule deliveries at a specific time. We used our routing technology to optimize the vehicle's travel schedule and make sure it could effectively balance demand among the businesses."

Ford also took the opportunity to test different interior designs for the purpose-built, self-driving vehicle planned to arrive in 2021, Buznego said.

For this test program, they used a customized Ford Escape to handle the deliveries. The Escape's cargo area was outfitted with a foam vase holder capable of securing four different floral arrangements, as well as with a clothes rack for items from the dry cleaners.

Testing modifications like these gives Ford important early insight into how to make delivery service most valuable to customers, Buznego said.

"As with our previous business pilot programs, the vehicles we use are not equipped with self-driving technology yet," Buznego said.

"We simulate the experience with graphics and sensor attachments so we can gather insights on how people will really interact with a self-driving vehicle in the future.

"The development of our self-driving technology, led by Argo AI, continues independent from these business experience tests."

For Romina, the delivery service meant relief. The app notified her when the vehicle arrived at her shop and gave her time to load the cargo area, which safely held her floral arrangements in place, even in Miami traffic.

She was able to track her deliveries through the app and reliably let her customers know when to expect their flowers, Buznego said.

"For a business like Romina's, filling delivery requests is often a stressful process," Buznego said. "Without a delivery van, she was usually left trying to find a delivery driver who could help – a complex task since some days she'd have more orders than others.

"A self-driving delivery service that she could tap into as needed brought an element of convenience to her business while ensuring her customers got their orders on time."

Beyond just handling customer orders, Ford found that a self-driving delivery service can bring other efficiencies for a small business, Buznego said.

At Giralda Cleaners in Coral Gables, owners Roland and Lydia Losas found that using the Ford service between their storefronts and processing plant boosted productivity at their four locations.

Their 22 employees were apprehensive about using a self-driving service, but soon came to love its convenience to the point that they kept asking about the availability of "el carro cybernético."

Instead of spending time driving back and forth to the plant, they were able to spend more time working with customers and performing other tasks at their storefronts, Buznego said.

"Lydia told us she honestly didn't expect the service to be as helpful as it was," Buznego said.

"Looking to the future, she and her husband are considering how the access to self-driving vehicles would allow them to expand their business. Between

coordinating current activities and dealing with maintenance fees, insurance and liability costs, growth is challenging without solutions like ours."

And that's the point. Self-driving vehicles have the potential to remedy many of the issues facing local businesses owners, said Buznego, allowing them to focus on what really matters – running their business.

"We're excited to be part of this important sector of our economy and community," Buznego said. "We're working to build a service that's accessible, reliable, and that helps our communities thrive.

"And when a third-generation florist calls our initial attempts at this kind of service 'a delivery life-saver,' we know we're on the right track."

Fisher Offers Chance to Win FCA Vehicles

FCA is sponsoring this season's Broadway in Detroit musical season at the Fisher Theater, and as part of this sponsorship, the company will be raffling off a 2019 Jeep Wrangler Sahara.

Those attending performances at the Fisher Theater can enter a raffle to win tickets to future Fisher shows as well as enter a raffle where the grand prize is a new Wrangler Sahara.

Another contest offers \$45,000 toward the purchase of any FCA product.

Fisher 2019 Broadway in Detroit shows include:

- "The Lightning Thief" – Feb. 26 - March 9.
- "Hamilton" – March 12 - April 21.
- "Waitress" – May 7-19.
- "Anastasia" – June 11-23.

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University of Detroit Mercy Offers STEM Help

Convincing young people to consider a career in math and science can be challenging. Students in a classroom setting don't necessarily get to experience how fun and exciting science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) fields can be.

University of Detroit Mercy's new iDRAW (innovating Detroit's Robotics Agile Workforce) program uses robotics as the primary theme to show students the fun in STEM. The elements of study essential to the field of robotics serve as core components to STEM careers.

"Sometimes math and science are abstract, it's hard, it's on paper and it's not very exciting, but robotics are math and science coming to life," said Richard Hill, assistant dean for Research & External Initiatives for Detroit Mercy's College of Engineering & Science. "In robotics, you can see something move and it does something cool."

"As a part of any robotics competition, the robots usually have to pick something up and move it to another location or they have to push another robot out of the way, different things like that. Robots and video games, as an engineer I understand those things are cool to a high school kid."

The objective of iDRAW is to reduce barriers and prepare at-risk youth for entry into STEM fields. It builds on existing, successful partnerships and programs to provide multiple career pathways into high-demand professions, Hill said.

According to recent research, by 2024 there will be 811,055 high-demand career openings in Michigan. Many of these will be in STEM fields. In addition, significant portions of Michigan's population face barriers to participation in STEM careers.

"These underrepresented pop-

ulations represent significant untapped potential," Hill said.

Through iDRAW, Detroit Mercy and project partners have the ability to begin tapping these potential students and help them engage in STEM-related disciplines and careers.

"There are not enough engineering students, there are not enough students in the STEM pipeline and we can't just sit back and wait for them to appear," Hill said. "We have to go out and do more to facilitate student interest in developing the skills to enter these fields."

iDRAW has partnered with area high schools, FIRST Robotics, the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation (DHDC) and corporate partners to help achieve its primary objective.

Melvindale High School and Detroit Cesar Chavez Academy are the first two schools iDRAW has partnered with and will begin offering courses at the two schools in the fall.

"They are schools where their students face challenges, but they've had some good success despite those challenges," Hill said. "They perform well academically with respect to comparable schools. And they have a good commitment to engineering. Both schools have good FIRST Robotics teams, good extracurricular activities and they've had success in sending kids to college in these fields. That is big."

Courses will initially be taught by college instructors with support from college student teaching assistants and a full-time administrator. During the process, high school teachers will receive training to take over responsibility for the courses, which will greatly reduce the long-term need for external support.

iDRAW will roll out a new course each semester for the

next six high school semesters with the goal of offering all six courses at each school.

The courses will lead to stackable badges and industry-recognized credentials. Some of the courses will qualify for dual-enrollment credit at Detroit Mercy and Henry Ford College.

The iDRAW program is funded by the State of Michigan's Marshall Plan for Talent Innovation Grant. Detroit Mercy's College of Engineering & Science is helping lead the Detroit Robotics Consortium, which received a grant of \$653,000 from the Marshall Plan.

"The Marshall Plan for Talent will assist our College in building a network of support and opportunities for students and high school teachers to provide pathways for students to STEM careers," said Katy Snyder, dean of Detroit Mercy's College of Engineering & Science.

The consortium features several corporate partners, including General Motors, DTE Energy, Ideal Group and FANUC.

Corporate partners have committed to supply funding,

mentors, training and hiring students out of the program.

iDRAW has also partnered with DHDC and its Robotics Engineering Center of Detroit (RECD) program.

DHDC offers after-school and summer programs to engage youth from fourth to 12th grades in STEM activities, including serving as the build site for the RECD's 10 FIRST Robotics teams. Over 150 high school students currently participate in the RECD program.

Programs like iDRAW are critical to closing the gap between the number of career openings in STEM fields and the number of qualified candidates, Hill said.

iDRAW's goals are that more than 200 students will earn recognition as official iDRAW graduates during the initial five-year period and, upon high school graduation, 75 percent of iDRAW graduates will immediately enter college in a STEM field or will be employed in a STEM occupation.

For more information on the iDRAW program, visit <http://engsci.udmercy.edu/about/idraw/index>, Hill said.



These students get help via University of Detroit Mercy's iDRAW program.

Last Volt Rolls Off Detroit Assembly Line

DETROIT (AP) - As their company was swirling around the financial drain in the early 2000s, General Motors executives came up with an idea to counter its gas-guzzling image and point the way to transportation of the future: an electric car with a gas-engine backup that could travel anywhere.

At Detroit's auto show in 2007, they unveiled the Chevrolet Volt concept car, not knowing yet whether they had the technology to pull off a major breakthrough in battery-powered vehicles.

It took nearly four more years, but the first Volt - a longer-range version of a plug-in hybrid - rolled off the assembly line late in 2010. GM had hopes that customers would be ready for a car that could go 38 miles on electricity before a small internal combustion generator kicked in.

They weren't. On Feb. 22, the last Volt was built with little ceremony at a Detroit factory that's now slated to close. Sales averaged less than 20,000 per year, not enough to sustain the Volt.

The Volt wasn't the first electric car, but it was the first to conquer anxiety over range at a reasonable cost. GM's limited-range EV1 came out in the 1990s, and Tesla put out its 200-plus-mile Roadster in 2008 for more than \$100,000.

The Volt was among the first plug-in hybrids, many of which can go only 20 or so miles on electricity and haven't gained much popularity among consumers.

Yet the Volt did serve a purpose. It led to advances in lithium-ion batteries similar to those that power smart phones and computers. But such advances ultimately led to the Volt's demise as GM and other manufacturers developed fully electric vehicles that can go 200 more miles per charge.

"While it was a financial loser, it did what was intended," said retired GM Vice Chairman Bob Lutz, who shepherded the Volt into production. "We viewed it as a stepping stone to full electrics, which were totally out of reach due to the then-astronomical cost of lithium-ion batteries."

DTE Using Wind Power to Power Up GM Facilities

It's not exactly free electric power, but it is blowing in the wind.

As part of its commitment to increasing its renewable energy footprint globally and finding clean energy solutions near its operations, General Motors has partnered with DTE Energy for 300,000 megawatt hours (MWh) of wind energy in the state of Michigan.

Once complete, the energy sourced will be enough to power 100 percent of the electricity needs of GM's global Tech Center in Warren and its Detroit-based operations at the Renaissance Center, said GM spokeswoman Jennifer Korail.

The 300,000 megawatt hours (MWh) are equivalent to the amount of power consumed by nearly 30,000 U.S. households per year.

To date, GM has contracted or invested in 1.71 terawatt hours of clean energy power in North America, equivalent to more than 145,000 households and more than any other automaker in the region, said Korail.

GM will source the wind power through an agreement with DTE Energy's MIGreenPower, a renewable energy program that enables DTE customers to attribute up to 100 percent of their energy

use to DTE clean energy projects in Michigan.

In January 2019, DTE received approval from the Michigan Public Service Commission to offer a MIGreenPower program designed for major Michigan corporations and industrial companies who want access to more renewable energy to meet corporate sustainability goals.

"Investing in renewable energy remains an important part of GM's vision for a zero emissions future," said Rob Threlkeld, GM's global manager of Sustainable Energy and Supply Reliability.

"Our partnership with DTE Energy will help us get closer to achieving our goal of powering all our operations in Michigan with 100 percent clean energy. It helps demonstrate that local and regional industry partnerships are paramount to GM's clean energy future, where renewable sources will account for 100 percent of our global energy footprint by 2050."

DTE plans to build or acquire additional clean energy projects

and expand MIGreenPower to meet increasing customer demand, Korail said.

It will begin sourcing to GM once the first new projects are on line.

As the state's largest producer of renewable energy, DTE will more than double its renewable energy generation capacity, investing an additional \$2 billion in wind and solar by 2024.

As part of the utility's commitment to reduce carbon emissions by more than 80 percent by the year 2050, DTE is significantly increasing the amount of clean energy in its power generation portfolio.

"Knowing that access to more renewable energy is important to our largest corporate and industrial customers, DTE will continue to expand MIGreenPower to help customers meet their sustainability targets," said Trevor F. Lauer, president of DTE Electric.

"We appreciate GM's environmental leadership and are excited that we can partner with them

through MIGreenPower to deliver on their clean energy goals."

The MIGreenPower agreement comes on the heels of General Motors reaching 20 percent of its global energy supply from renewables.

General Motors is a member of the Renewable Energy Buyers Alliance (REBA).

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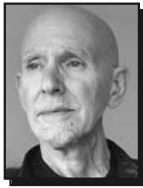
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Gilmore Museum Honors Model History

A lost piece of automotive history will be brought to light at the Gilmore Car Museum near Kalamazoo this year.

Between April 6 and Oct. 1, the museum is putting on its Fisher Body Craftsman's Guild (FBCG) Reunion & Model Exhibition.

This project has been in the planning phase for more than a year, said John Jacobus, a former member of the Guild.

General Motor's FBCG was sponsored by the Fisher Body Division in 1930-1968.

It was an automobile design competition for American youths (ages 11-20) to design, engineer and build 1/12-scale model "Dream Cars," using their imagination and creativity, Jacobus said.

Guildsmen used laminated wood (e.g., sugar pine, poplar or balsawood) to carve and shape their 3-dimensional concept cars, while others used plaster, fiberglass or rigid polyurethane. Harley J. Earl, Chuck Jordan and Bill Mitchell (GM Styling then GM Design) organized and ran the FBCG model car competitions.

At the end of the school year, the Guildsmen shipped their finished 1/12-scale model creations to the Fisher Body Engineering Administrative offices at 12 Mile Road & Van Dyke Avenue. The program was popular among teenagers and thousands of entries were received annually.

The models were scored based on originality of design, craftsmanship, workmanship, aesthetics, appearance, scale fidelity, practicality, etc., Jacobus said. GM's Styling Staff (later called Design Staff) scored the amateur automobile designs in concert with Industrial Arts teachers from the Detroit School System.

Together, they awarded college scholarships to national winners, cash awards to state

winners, as well as trophies and Certificates of Design and Craftsmanship.

"I maintain the Guild mailing list," Jacobus said. "Guildsmen (former participants) have been contacted across the country and models are being shipped or hand-delivered to the Gilmore. More than 80 models have been committed so far and they expect over 100-plus for the big show."

The scholarships were worth thousands of dollars and enabled some of the talented Guildsmen to pursue design training at professional schools (e.g., Pratt Institute, Art Center College of Design) or at similar colleges/universities with Industrial Design programs in Transportation or Product Design.

Many had successful careers in the burgeoning field of Industrial Design, Jacobus said.

Some well-known Guildsmen include Gary Graham (1954), E. Arthur Russell (1957), Terry R. Henline (1958), Ronald J. Will, Thomas L. Covert (1962), Robert E. Davids (1963) and Thomas Semple (1964), Jacobus said.

Henline, Will, Covert, and Semple are examples of Guildsmen who had successful careers as auto designers and rose to top leadership positions.

The site where all the important Guild business occurred (e.g., model scoring/grading, the Annual Guild Convention and the GM VIPs awarding scholarships) was at the GM Tech Center's Fisher Body Engineering Headquarters Auditorium.

"Although the Guild scholarship program operated from 1930 to 1968, this site is where all the 'action' played out from 1955 to 1968," Jacobus said.

The Gilmore Car Museum is located in Hickory Corners near Kalamazoo, and houses one of Michigan's largest collections of classic and vintage automobiles. More than 300 vintage and collector vehicles and motorcycles from all eras are on display in over a dozen vintage buildings located on 90 acres.

To learn more about the museum and the upcoming exhibition, go to its Web site at gilmorecar-museum.org.



Jacobus' model car from 1961 will be part of the Gilmore exhibition.

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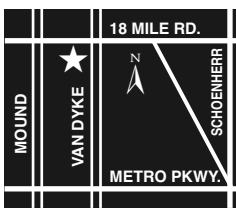
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UAW Suing General Motors For Closing Three Plants

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio (AP) – The United Auto Workers has sued General Motors for closing three plants in Ohio, Michigan and Maryland, claiming the union's current contract forbids the company from idling them, according to the suit filed in court last week.

GM announced plans in November to end production at U.S. plants in Lordstown, Ohio; White Marsh, Md.; Warren, and Hamtramck. GM announced this week that production at the Hamtramck plant, which borders Detroit, would continue until January, after the UAW contract expires. The plant was not included in the lawsuit.

The UAW's lawsuit includes a September 2015 letter from GM Vice President Catherine Clegg that says her correspondence "confirms" the company won't close, idle, sell off or consolidate plants during the union contract, which expires in September.

GM said in a statement Feb. 26 that the company's announcement last year about the closings doesn't violate the UAW contract.

"We continue to work with the UAW on solutions to our business challenges," the statement said.

Workers at Lordstown and the other plants are hoping the union will be able to negotiate to keep their factories open after the contract talks formally open this summer. Lordstown, which is expected to be idled in early June, has drawn support from President Donald Trump, who has campaigned on saving industrial jobs in Ohio, a key state in his 2020 re-election bid.

Lordstown has around 1,400 hourly workers who help assem-

ble the Cruze subcompact sedan. The Maryland plant manufactures electric motors and drive trains and employs 250 workers. The Warren plant has 265 workers who make transmissions.

New Vehicle Transaction Prices Are Up

The analysts at Kelley Blue Book reported the estimated average transaction price for a light vehicle in the United States was \$36,590 in February 2019. New-vehicle prices increased \$993 (up 2.8 percent) from February 2018, while decreasing \$205 (down 0.5 percent) from last month.

"New-vehicle transaction prices climbed nearly 3 percent in February, led by the strength in full-size pickup trucks," said Tim Fleming, analyst for Kelley Blue Book. "New pickups from General Motors and RAM are setting the pace for the segment, and every full-size pickup truck had year-over-year growth greater than 4 percent. Looking at midsize trucks, the segment was only up 1 percent for the month, but it is set for a similar revival with the new Ford Ranger hitting the market right now and the Jeep Gladiator coming soon."

Gaining most year-over-year, Ford's average prices were up more than 5 percent, with both Ford and Lincoln up by 5 percent. Ford's strength was led by the refreshed Edge and its new ST trim, which helped pull the model's average up 5 percent. The F-Series also saw prices rise as the Super Duty trucks capture a larger share of sales.

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