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GM employees have started making Level 1 face masks at the company's Warren manufacturing facility.

GM Surgical Masks Operation Goes Ahead

General Motors has stepped up to help medical professionals fight the COVID-19 virus.

As the Coronavirus pandemic spread across the country, it created a critical shortage of face masks. To help protect workers in essential services across the country, GM launched a rapid-re-

sponse project to produce masks at scale on March 20. Seven days later, the team had produced their first sample on the new production line, said GM spokesman Monte Doran.

By April 3, GM expects to have delivered its first 20,000 masks to frontline workers.

Without help from GM's partners around the globe, the project would have taken several months to plan and execute, Doran said. The team working on GM's face-mask project accomplished the task in just one week.

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Detroit OEMs Establish New Pay Scale During the Crisis

by Jim Stickford

In response to the unprecedented COVID-19 virus outbreak, all three of the Detroit automakers have instituted new salary deferment programs.

Sources at FCA say that company CEO Mike Manley sent employees a company-wide memo at the end of March explaining what FCA is doing about salaries during the virus crisis.

"As you know, keeping up a frequent pace of communications given the scale of changes taking place is a priority for us," Manley wrote. "To support that increased communication flow, I asked our regional leaders to start holding virtual town hall meetings.

"I am pleased to report that over 25,000 employees have already joined meetings last week held across LATAM (Latin America), North America and EMEA (Europe Middle East Africa), with APAC's (Asia Pacific) town hall scheduled for this coming Friday (March 27). I think this is a great start and we'll be looking to widen participation in the coming weeks."

Manley's memo went on to state that as the virus has spread, the company has worked



Mike Manley, FCA CEO

to create a safe place for its employees. Additionally, some changes have been made concerning salaries.

"Protecting the financial health of the company is everyone's responsibility and naturally starts with myself and the leadership of FCA. So, to help achieve this and to avoid the layoff of any permanent employees for the coming quarter, starting April 1 for the next three months I will take a 50 percent cut in my salary and the

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Detroit Automakers See Mixed Sales in First Quarter

Jeep and Pacifica Bright Spots in FCA Sales

FCA had a 10 percent decline in its first-quarter sales as the strong momentum in January and February was more than offset by the negative economic impact of the coronavirus in March, said U.S. Head of Sales Jeff Kommor.

"Our dealers have once again stepped up as pillars of the community as they have continued to provide critical support to our program," said Kommor.

"Many have taken extraordinary steps, ranging from enhanced sanitizing protocols for their showrooms to the offer of home delivery and other concierge services to keep consumers safe. I applaud all of them for their efforts."

For the quarter, U.S. sales were 446,768 vehicles compared with 498,425 for the same period a year earlier, Kommor said. Retail sales were 306,898 vehicles for

the quarter. Fleet accounted for 31 percent of total sales.

Ram pickup trucks were a bright spot as sales rose 7 percent to 128,805 vehicles. Overall, the Ram brand rose 3 percent to 140,486 vehicles. Chrysler Pacifica sales rose 5 percent to 24,525 and Jeep Gladiator notched sales of 15,259 vehicles. It was the third consecutive quarter

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2020 Chrysler Pacifica



2020 Ford Ranger

Ford Ranger Sales Strong in First Quarter

Amid the COVID-19 crisis, Ford officials reported 12.5 percent decrease in 2020 first-quarter sales compared with the same period in 2019.

Mark LaNeve, Ford vice president, U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service, said that Ford's overall inventory levels remain in good shape during a period of production downtime and lower industry sales; overall days' supply at Ford stands at 100

days at the end of the month of March.

"With sales of 186,562 pickups, F-Series begins the year as America's best-selling vehicle; while sales are down 13.1 percent, the decline is explained by the timing of our fleet sales and weaker retail sales in March due to the coronavirus," LaNeve said. "Ford overall van sales totaled 54,499 vans – up 5.7 percent. As America's best-selling van, Transit

sales increased 15.7 percent on sales of 36,836 vans for the quarter – the best sales start since its launch in 2014."

Sales of the new Ford Ranger were particularly strong, LaNeve said, with 20,980 in the first quarter of 2020. That represents a 122.7 percent increase over first-quarter 2019 sales of 9,421.

LaNeve also noted that amid

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GM Sales Networks Adapt to Environment

General Motors delivered 618,335 vehicles in the first quarter of 2020, a decrease of about 7 percent compared to a year ago.

The industry experienced significant declines in March due to the outbreak of COVID-19, said Kurt McNeil, GM's U.S. vice president, Sales Operations.

"In this uncertain and challenging time, GM and our strong network of dealers are here to help, offering concierge service, pro-

viding courtesy transportation to customers in need and offering home delivery where permissible," said McNeil.

In many areas with stay-at-home orders, dealer service operations are considered essential and can remain open to address crucial vehicle needs for essential service providers like first responders, healthcare workers and food supply and delivery workers, McNeil said.

Safety remains the company's top priority, McNeil said. "Customers who need to purchase a new vehicle can use GM's Shop. Click. Drive. program, which allows them to browse inventory, choose a vehicle, customize their payment and schedule delivery at home where available."

To further assist, GM has enabled OnStar Crisis Assist

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2019 Chevy Blazer

view this week's edition at DetroitAutoScene.com

GM Surgical Mask Production Now Underway

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General Motors has stepped up to help medical professionals fight the COVID-19 virus.

As the Conornavirus pandemic spread across the country, it created a critical shortage of face masks. To help protect workers in essential services across the country, GM launched a rapid-response project to produce masks at scale on March 20. Seven days later, the team had produced their first sample on the new production line, said GM spokesman Monte Doran.

By April 3, GM expects to have delivered its first 20,000 masks to frontline workers.

Without help from GM’s partners around the globe, the project would have taken several months to plan and execute, Doran said. The team working on GM’s face-mask project accomplished the task in just one week.

“Our team began looking at ways we could quickly utilize our talents and resources to help in the shared fight against COVID-19,” said Peter Thom, GM vice president, Global Manufac-

turing Engineering. “Working around the clock, our team rallied with incredible passion and focus to come up with a plan to produce masks that will help protect the women and men on the front lines of this crisis.”

At 3 p.m. on Friday, March 20, the core team assembled for the first time, kicking off the project and starting the timer, Doran said.

“Because we wanted to move fast, the team set an incredibly aggressive goal: To have the production line up and running tests within a week,” said Thom.

More than 30 engineers, designers, buyers and members of the manufacturing team were asked to help with product development, sourcing materials and equipment, and planning the production process.

“The first people we called were those who work with fabric vehicle components,” said Karsten Garbe, GM plant director, Global Pre-Production Operations. “In a few days, the company’s seat belt and interior trim experts became experts in manufacturing face masks.”

The team sourced the necessary raw materials by leveraging

GM’s existing supply chain, Doran said. These materials include metal nose pieces, elastic straps and blown, non-woven fabric filter material. Simultaneously, GM collaborated with JR Automation in Holland, Mich., and Esys Automation in Auburn Hills to design and build the custom machinery needed to assemble the masks.

“The first people we called were those who work with vehicle fabric components.”
– Karsten Garbe, GM Plant Director

For the project, the team selected the ISO Class 8-equivalent cleanroom at GM’s former transmission manufacturing plant in Warren, Doran said. Work began at the Warren facility by removing existing equipment from the cleanroom.

The team cleared approximately 31,000 square feet to accommodate the mask production lines. Crews then installed new electrical service lines to power the production equipment and assembly stations.

With the site cleared and prepped, production equipment and materials were then delivered to the Warren facility. Crews worked around the clock to install equipment and stage the production line. The team then tested each step in the production process, looking for op-

portunities to improve quality and production speed.

At 2:30 p.m. on March 27, the project team had their first production-made mask in their hands.

“Not only did the team make their goal, but they over-delivered,” said Thom. “They actually beat our deadline, running the first mask through the equipment 30 minutes ahead of target. We’re excited because this means we’re even closer to being able to protect the health-care teams who are working tirelessly to save lives.”

The projected production volume is just as aggressive as the project’s timeline. By March 30, more than 2,000 masks were produced by teams working through the weekend, Doran said. These initial test samples will be used to ensure the quality standards are met. Once these quality measures are completed, the team expects to start producing masks for delivery early next week.

GM and the UAW will seek more than two dozen paid volunteers from Detroit-area plants to staff mask operations, Thom said. In addition, GM has implemented a series of safety measures to protect these team members through physical distancing, enhanced on-site cleaning and pre-entry health screening.

The team expects to have 20,000 masks ready for delivery on Wednesday, April 8. Once the line is running at full speed, it will be able to produce up to 50,000 masks every day – or up to 1.5 million masks a month, Doran said. GM is currently developing a plan for distributing the masks, including using some of this important safety equipment to protect employees in critical GM operations.

Jeep and Pacifica Help FCA Sales

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Gladiator has surpassed the 15,000 mark, said Kommor.

FCA will continue working with its financial providers to ensure customers receive the help they need during these challenging times, he said. Effective immediately, FCA will ease the purchase process through the “Drive Forward” initiative, which provides consumers with incentives and FCA’s new Online Retail Experience (ORE).

Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram Truck, Fiat and Alfa Romeo brands will offer 24/7 support and well-qualified buyers can get 0 percent financing for 84 months and no payments for 90 days on select 2019 and 2020 models, Kommor said. Additionally, FCA is folding “Chrysler Pacifica Family Pricing” and “Dodge Power Dollars” into Drive Forward.

ORE is a digital retailing solution created in response to the COVID-19 outbreak that allows customers to complete the entire vehicle purchase process online from the comfort of their own homes.

Not only can consumers purchase a vehicle they are interested in off a dealer lot, they can conduct a vehicle trade-in, apply for credit, receive price and payment estimates and review service protection plan options.

Customers can explore ORE via the Chrysler, Dodge, Jeep, Ram Truck, Fiat and Alfa Romeo brand websites where they can begin the purchase process, then connect with a local dealer to finalize the sale, saving time in the process.

A call center agent is available to help consumers with any of their questions.

Ranger a Ford Sales Success

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the coronavirus shutdown, Ford brand SUV retail sales were off 12.7 percent. Sales of the new 2020 Ford Explorer SUV, at 56,310, bucked this trend in the first quarter posting a retail sales gain of 10.5 percent compared to the fourth quarter of 2019, when Ford sold 48,083.

And in the first quarter, Explorer had double-digit retail sales growth in many parts of the country, including the Great Lakes, central and coastal regions.

These numbers weren’t the only good news for Ford, LaNeve said. Lincoln’s newest SUVs – the new Aviator and Corsair – lifted Lincoln retail sales 6.9 percent in the first quarter. Aviator continues to deliver strong incremental sales to overall Lincoln volumes, adding 5,666 vehicles to the Lincoln portfolio, while attracting younger buyers to Lincoln showrooms.

And of particular interest, the fastest rate of growth is coming

from buyers 35 to 44 years old, LaNeve said.

And the COVID-19 virus hasn’t dampened Ford customers’ love of performance vehicles, LaNeve said. The performance lineup of vehicles saw strong gains. Mustang begins the year with sales of 18,069 vehicles, representing a 6.8 percent gain, while GT350/Shelby special edition GT500 sales doubled.

“At Ford, we feel a deep obligation to step up and contribute in these unprecedented times,” LaNeve said. “Our dealers and employees have jumped into action to support healthcare workers, their communities and millions of our customers.

“Our Ford team is working around the clock on everything from building healthcare equipment, assisting our dealership network and providing our customers peace of mind through deferred vehicle payments. I have never been more proud of our team.”

GM Sales Network Offers Assistance During Crisis

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services for all connected vehicle owners, as well as complimentary in-vehicle data for all Wi-Fi-equipped vehicles.

Inventory at the end of the first quarter was 668,443 units, down about 18 percent from a year ago, said GM spokeswoman Stephanie Rice.

During the first quarter, the Buick brand sold 33,870 vehicles, Rice said, a 34.7 percent decline over the first quarter of 2019, when the brand sold 51,867.

Buick wasn’t GM’s only brand to see a decline in the first quarter of 2020, compared to the first quarter of 2019.

Cadillac saw its sales drop by 15.8 percent, going from 35,995 to 30,325.

Chevrolet, on the other hand, showed relatively strong sales, dropping only 3.8 percent in the first quarter of 2020 compared to 2019. The brand sold 435,422 compared to 452,401.

GMC also showed relatively robust sales for the first quarter of 2020. The brand only saw sales drop by 5.5 percent, selling 118,718 compared to 2019’s 125,577, Rice said.

Particular vehicles enjoyed great success in the first quarter of 2020, Rice said. The Chevy Blazer really took off. The 2019 edition of the Blazer only started production in December of 2018, so the first quarter sales reflect the vehicle’s new launch. Chevy sold 3,023 Blazers in the first quarter of 2019. But 2020 saw a sales increase of 632.5 percent with Chevy selling 22,144 Blazers.

Sales of the Bolt EV also went up by 36.1 percent in the first quarter of 2020. Chevy sold 5,873 compared to 2019’s 4,316.

Chevy Silverado LD edition sales were also strong in the first quarter, Rice said. Chevy saw a sales increase of 33.6 percent, with sales going from 84,496 in 2019 to 112,925 in 2020.

GMC’s Sierra HD and LD editions also saw stronger sales in 2020, Rice said. The HD’s sales went from 9,242 in 2019 to 13,168 in 2020 – an increase of 42.5 percent. LD sales went from 31,304 to 39,841 in just a year. That represents an increase of 27.3 percent.

For full details on how GM is responding to the rapidly changing COVID-19 crisis, visit gm.com/coronavirus.

Detroit OEMs Establishing New Payscales

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Group Executive Council (GEC) will all take a 30 percent cut.

“We will also ask most global salaried employees not impacted by local downtime plans to take a temporary 20 percent salary deferment as part of this shared sacrifice. The process will vary by country and agreements may be required. Further, our Chairman John Elkann and our Board of Directors have unanimously agreed to forgo their remaining 2020 compensation.”

FCA wasn’t the only Detroit automaker to make such changes. GM spokesman Jim Cain, in a statement to the media, laid out just what GM is doing as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.

“GM’s business and its balance sheet was very strong before the COVID-19 outbreak and the steps we are taking now will help ensure that we can regain our momentum as quickly as possible after this crisis is over,” Cain wrote.

Highlights of GM Compensation Adjustments:

- Globally, all GM salaried employees will have 20 percent of their cash compensation deferred beginning April 1.
- This deferment will be repaid in a lump sum with interest no later than March 15, 2021.
- As part of this shared sacrifice, executives will see a total of 25 percent reduction and 30 percent for the Senior Leadership team.
- GM’s Board of Directors will take a 20 percent reduction in compensation.
- Healthcare benefits are not impacted.
- At 2019CYE, GM had approximately 69,000 salaried employees (42 percent of of the company’s global workforce).

- The immediate cash savings will be significant, but we are not providing a range.

Salaried Downtime Paid Absence (SDPA):

- About 6,500 salaried employees in the U.S. will participate in SPDA in lieu of the salaried deferral program. Other countries are evaluating the appropriate use of similar programs.
- These salaried employees will receive 75 percent of their pay while on SDPA. This reduced salary is intended to be instead of unemployment compensation benefits.
- Most affected employees are in salaried Manufacturing or Engineering roles and are not able to work remotely.

Ford also has instituted salary plans as a result of the COVID-19 virus.

Ford spokesman T.R. Reid said that the company’s executive leadership has been engaging with the problems created by the virus since January.

“Our first objective has always been, in January and now, to come up with guidance as how to keep our people safe,” Reid said. “We have also worked to get help to people at our company who need it. So, on March 26, Ford CEO Jim Hackett released a memo explaining what is happening.”

Hackett wrote that sacrifice starts at the top and that “is why the top 300 Ford senior executives will defer 20 to 50 percent of their salaries for at least five months starting May 1. Bill Ford has decided to defer his entire salary for this period.”

Second, Ford’s goal is to manage through the crisis without

eliminating Ford jobs, Hackett wrote.

“Our people are dealing with enough challenges without being out of work, too. Plus, on the other side of the crisis, we will need our talented team to quickly ramp up to our full potential. Having said that, if the effects of the Coronavirus on the global economy and Ford go on for longer – or are more severe – than we currently anticipate, we may have to take tougher actions. But not today,” Hackett wrote.

“Third, the actions Ford’s taking now are expected to be short-term. Again, some actions will vary by business unit and function. Globally, we are deferring merit-based salary increases, suspending overtime for salaried team members, and freezing all hiring for noncritical skill positions.

“Most importantly, we will continue to protect the health and well-being of our people. Work schedules and compensation may be temporarily reduced for people whose jobs can’t be done effectively away from Ford facilities,” Hackett wrote. “Others might be offered chances to take voluntary sabbaticals. In these and other cases, we will continue to provide health insurance and, for people who are exposed to the coronavirus, paid time off to cover a 14-day quarantine.

“The actions we’re taking now are wide-ranging and substantial. We hope they will be enough to give Ford the financial flexibility to ride out the economic and business effects of the coronavirus – so we can emerge as a stronger company.

“More than ever, I thank you for your resilience and commitment to each other and all Ford stakeholders during this extraordinary period.”

Ford's Partnerships to Construct Ventilators Progressing

Ford Motor Company's efforts to help provide aid during the COVID-19 virus emergency are continuing at a strong pace.

The company, in collaboration with GE Healthcare, announced it has started producing in Michigan a third-party ventilator with the goal to produce 50,000 of the vitally needed units within 100 days and up to 30,000 a month thereafter as needed, said Ford spokesman Mike Levine.

Ford is providing its manufacturing capabilities to quickly scale production, and GE Healthcare will provide its clinical expertise and will license the current ventilator design from Airon Corp. – a small, privately held company specializing in high-tech pneumatic life support products.

GE Healthcare brought the Airon Corp. design to Ford's attention as part of the companies' efforts to scale production of ventilators quickly to help clinicians treat COVID-19 patients, Levine said.

The GE/Airon Model A-E ventilator uses a design that operates on air pressure without the need for electricity, addressing the needs of most patients who have contracted the COVID-19 virus, Levine said.

Its production can be quickly scaled up to help meet the growing demand in the U.S., Levine said.

"The Ford and GE Healthcare teams, working creatively and tirelessly, have found a way to produce this vitally needed ventilator quickly and in meaningful numbers," said Jim Hackett, Ford's president and CEO. "By producing this ventilator in Michigan, in strong partnership with the UAW, we can help health care workers save lives, and that's our No. 1 priority."

According to White House Defense Production Act Coordinator Peter Navarro, "The Ford/GE Healthcare team is moving in 'Trump time' to speed urgently needed ventilators to the front lines of the Trump Administration's full-scale war against the coronavirus.

Just as Ford in the last century moved its manufacturing might seamlessly from auto to tank production during World War II, the Ford team is working with GE Healthcare to use its awesome engineering and manufacturing capabilities to voluntarily help this nation solve one of its most pressing problems by teaming up with GE to manufacture much-needed ventilators that will be used to fight the virus, Levine said.

"We salute that effort and look forward to the first ventilators rolling off the Michigan assembly line in record time – and we'll be there to salute that milestone."

Ford will initially send a team to work with Airon to boost production in Florida, and by the week of April 20, will start production at Ford's Rawsonville Components Plant in Ypsilanti, quickly ramping up to reach full production to help meet surging demand, Levine said.

Ford expects to produce 1,500 by the end of April, 12,000 by the end of May and 50,000 by July 4 – helping the United States government meet its stated goal of producing 100,000 ventilators in 100 days.

Ford's Rawsonville plant will produce the ventilators nearly around the clock, with 500 paid volunteer UAW-represented employees working on three shifts, Levine said.

Airon currently produces three Airon pNeuton Model A ventilators per day at the company's production site located in Melbourne, Fla.

At full production, Ford plans to manufacture approximately 7,200 Airon-licensed Model A-E ventilators every week, Levine said.

"From the days of Rosie the Riveter, UAW members have stepped up during difficult times in this nation's history for the good of us all," said UAW International President Rory Gamble. "Today's announcement by Ford that UAW employees will make ventilators at Rawsonville is in that tradition. We are working very closely with Ford to make sure that all CDC guidelines are followed and that we are exercising an abundance of caution inside the plant.

"Ford and our UAW Ford members should be commended for stepping up in these very uncertain times."

The Airon-licensed Model A-E ventilator is the second Ford-GE Healthcare ventilator collaboration.

In mid-March, Ford and GE Healthcare began a separate effort to produce a simplified ventilator design from GE Healthcare, Levine said.

The combined ventilator supply will help address the increasing surge demand for ventilators around the U.S. in the fight against COVID-19, each well suited to meet time, production volume and patient care requirements, Levine said.

"We applaud Ford for its efforts to lend its manufacturing capabilities to help quickly scale the Airon-licensed Model A-E ventilator and arm clinicians in the fight against COVID-19," said GE Healthcare President and CEO Kieran Murphy. "Our deep understanding of the health care industry with Ford's supply chain and production expertise will help



Ford and General Electric have teamed up to manufacture ventilators during the COVID-19 crisis.

meet the unprecedented demand for medical equipment. We continue to be encouraged by how quickly companies are coming together in innovative ways to address this collective challenge."

GE Healthcare and Ford engineers consulted with a variety of medical experts in determining the Airon-licensed Model A-E

ventilator is well suited for COVID-19 patient care, Levine said.

The design of the ventilator is expected to meet the needs of most COVID-19 patients with respiratory failure or difficulty breathing.

The ventilator is designed for quick setup, making it easy for healthcare workers to use – and

can be deployed in an emergency room setting, during special procedures or in an intensive care unit, wherever the patient may be located.

Ford Motor Company, along with the companies it is supporting, will continue to provide additional updates as these special manufacturing projects progress, Levine said.

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2020 NAIAS Show's Canceled

2020 was going to be the first year the North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) was going to be held in June instead of January.

NAIAS executive Director Rod Alberts said the move meant with warm June weather, the show could expand to outdoor venues and just generally show off Detroit and how the city's downtown has grown and changed.

To that end, the NAIAS board planned the event to take into account just about every contingency, Alberts said. They prepared for everything, except a once-in-a-century virus pandemic. So on March 28, the NAIAS board canceled its June 2020 show in Detroit.

NAIAS spokesman Brent Snavely said it was the only thing to do in light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic sweeping across the world and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's expected plans to repurpose TCF Center into a temporary field hospital.

"Although we are disappointed, there is nothing more important to us than the health, safety and well-being of the citizens of Detroit and Michigan, and we will do what we can to support our community's fight against the Coronavirus outbreak," said Alberts.

"With the more than 100 convention centers and facilities around the country being considered to potentially serve as temporary hospitals, it became clear to us that TCF Center would be an inevitable option to serve as a care facility to satisfy our community's urgent health needs."

One of the hallmarks of NAIAS since the very beginning has been the organization's commitment to being socially responsible, Alberts said.

"Our thoughts continue to be with those whose lives have been impacted by this devastating virus. And, we support the city and state's mission to help preserve life in the face of this challenging situation," Alberts said.

With the 2020 event canceled, the only thing to do is to plan for the 2021 show, Alberts said. So NAIAS will hold its next annual show in June 2021.

2020 NAIAS Chairman Doug North said show officials are also discussing plans for a fundraising activity later this year to benefit the children's charities that were designated as beneficiaries of the 2020 Charity Preview event.

"We know these organizations rely on the money raised at Charity Preview to fund many wonderful support services for the most vulnerable in our community," North said. "With this in mind, we will be in touch with the charities in the near future to present some ideas."

North, who will act as chairman of the 2021 NAIAS, expressed the show's gratitude to all of its stakeholders, Snavely said.

"The level of excitement for the 2020 show was extraordinary, and we deeply appreciate all of the support from our OEM partners and our more than 200 valued sponsors, as well as the city of Detroit and the state of Michigan," North said.

"We will be ready to unleash this energy and enthusiasm when June 2021 rolls around to produce the absolute best show and experience ever. We look forward to literally redefining the auto show landscape with fresh ideas and innovative opportunities for mobility activations and partnerships," North said.

General Motors' Programs to Create New EV Infrastructure Part of Tech Promotion

by Jim Stickford

It's the classic chicken or the egg problem. People hesitate to buy EVs because there's no place to charge them. But companies are hesitant to build EV charging stations because there are so few EVs on the road.

To solve that problem, General Motors is doing a lot to promote the creation of an EV charging infrastructure that will help those who already own EVs and help those on the fence about buying an EV take the plunge.

"This kind of thing has been a problem with many industries as they develop new technologies," said Jordan Catrine - EV Infrastructure Business Development manager, Global Autonomous Technology & Vehicle Execution at GM. "They need demand for a product to be enough to support the infrastructure for that product. We are in the early days of the EV and I like to think that people will charge their EVs the same way they charge their cell phones. They plug in the device and forget about it until the next time they need to use it."

Catrine said that if people own an EV and their own home, they can, via a Level 1 110-volt outlet just plug their car in and it will charge overnight, much the same way people charge their phones.

And there are now options for people who want to charge their EVs faster. They can install a Level 2 charger in their garage. This operates out of a 240-volt outlet, like the ones used to operate equipment like a dryer.

This system charges much faster, Catrine said. It charges the Bolt EV at the rate of 25 miles of range per hour. So within a couple of hours, someone can get about 50 miles of range via Level 2 charging.

And then there is charging one's EV at a person's place of work, Catrine said. GM has recently increased the number of charging stations at its facilities, so that people who drive EVs and work for the company have a place to charge their vehicles.

Catrine said a Department of Energy study shows that new car buyers are six times more likely to consider buying an EV if their place of employment has a charger.

"Many companies have charging stations and offer them to employees as a work benefit," Catrine said. "It's just one more thing that makes working for a particular company more attractive."

And GM has made moves to help EV drivers get the help they need to have chargers installed at their homes.

"We have partnered with a company called Qmerit," Catrine said. "What they do is, via a link, find qualified electricians who are trained to install EV chargers in people's homes. People use their phones to take pictures of the area where they want to install the charger. The electricians can look at the photos to determine how they would charge to install a charger."

"The app provides users with information from three different electricians so people can pick the quote they want to use. All this happens without having to contact people and having them come to the house before submitting a quote."

This service is important because currently about 80 percent of EV charging is done at home, Catrine said.

"Right now, less than 10 percent of charging is done at outside locations - not work or home," Catrine said. "We call this the gas station effect. Gas stations have big signs and lights indicating that people can get fuel



Jordan Catrine

for their cars. There's nothing like that for outside chargers, so people tend not to think of them when it comes time to charge their EVs."

GM is also offering a service that allows people to map the best route to charge one's vehicle, Catrine said.

"Most people don't drive more than 50 miles in a day," Catrine said. "So if your EV full charge offers a range of 200 miles, you won't have to charge your vehicle every night. But say you want to drive from Detroit to Chicago. That distance is greater than the range of a fully-charged Bolt EV."

That's where GM's special charging location app comes into play. This app downloads information from your EV and then maps out a route where drivers can find charging stations, Catrine said. And the app further indicates whether the stations are operational and open for use.

So that driver going from Detroit to Chicago will have routes created that show where and when they can charge their cars.

"Remember, when driving, things like air conditioning affect the rate energy is used," Catrine said. "So the app takes something like that into account and can estimate where drivers can charge given their vehicles' particular energy consumption."

And when it comes to the cost of charging a vehicle, GM works with customer to inform them of services like "smart charging."

"It's a broad concept that uses Vehicle Grid Integration (VGI)," Catrine said. "Consumption of electricity varies, depending on the time of day. So GM has a program that can delay when charg-

ing takes place. You go home, plug in your EV, but the charging doesn't take place until demand is lower. That can save money. And you can use VGI to charge when electric companies are using wind power to generate electricity. That means you can be totally green when charging your vehicle."

The benefits of this is that the work can be done via telematics, Catrine said. Your vehicle uses its internal telematics systems to communicate with other systems to create the optimal charging situation.

Catrine said that GM is dedicated to increasing the number of EVs on the road. And improving charging infrastructure is one way to do that.

"Our studies have found that three things give people pause when looking to buy EVs," Catrine said. "First is cost of an EV. And GM is working hard to bring the cost of buying one down. Second is range. GM has come a long way in improving the range of its EVs. Third is no place to charge, which is why we've developed alliances with other companies and developed apps to inform the public where they can go."

As to what's next, Catrine said GM will continue to work to improve the customer experience of owning an EV.

"We believe we have to get home, work and public spaces integrated when it comes to charging," Catrine said. "We are working with partners to include more chargers in public spaces. We know there aren't enough chargers out there and we are working constantly on that problem."

Nissan Issues Airbag Recall

DETROIT (AP) - Nissan is recalling more than a quarter-million SUVs, trucks and vans worldwide to replace potentially dangerous Takata air bag inflators.

The vehicles have air bags with volatile ammonium nitrate that can explode with too much force and hurl shrapnel.

But they have a moisture-absorbing chemical that was supposed to make them safe. U.S. safety regulators are to determine whether all inflators with the drying agent have to be recalled.

The Nissan recall covers certain 2012 to 2017 Nissan NV Cargo and Passenger vans, the 2013 to 2015 Nissan Titan pickup and Armada large SUV, and the 2011 and 2012 Infiniti QX56 SUV.

Documents posted April 2 by

the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration say Takata packed in too much ammonium nitrate propellant while manufacturing the inflators.

Nissan will notify owners later this month and dealers will replace the front driver air bag inflator with one made by a different company.

Takata had until the end of last year to prove that the inflators with the drying agent were safe, or NHTSA was to order them all to be recalled. NHTSA has not made a decision yet.

A message was left on April 2 seeking comment from a NHTSA spokesman.

So far, at least 25 people have died worldwide after being hit by shrapnel from Takata air bag inflators, and more than 300 have been injured.

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Car Enthusiast Leno Uses Time Off to Get Back to Basics

by Jim Stickford

Ultimate Car Guy Jay Leno is using his time in the COVID-19 virus quarantine as an opportunity to slow down and, if not smell the roses, to clean some engines.

“This is a most interesting time for me,” Leno said. “I don’t take vacations. I am not a guy who turns down jobs. I’ve been like that since the 1970s, so this crisis is kind of like an enforced vacation.”

Leno said in at interview with the Detroit Auto Scene on April 1, that he’s been able to just work in his garage on his cars and motorcycles for the sheer joy of working on cars and motorcycles.

“In 1980, I bought a Vincent Rapide motorcycle,” Leno said. “I wasn’t working that much at that time, so I spent a lot of time working on the Rapide. Then I got busy and didn’t have the time to pay a lot of attention to the Rapide. But eight days ago, I got out my old toothbrush and started really working on it again.

“The Vincent Rapide engine is like an English muffin, there are a not of nooks and crannies, so you have to get in there with a toothbrush. I really find that kind of thing relaxing.”

When asked how he was coping with these unprecedented times, Leno said that they’re not unprecedented. There was the influenza outbreak of 1918, sometimes called the Spanish flu pandemic.

“We have seen this before,” Leno said. “In 1918, I had an aunt who got married, and on the day of her wedding she showed symptoms of the flu. They took her to the hospital while she was still wearing her wedding dress and three hours later she was dead. So this is not something brand new.

But while he’s enjoying his enforced vacation, Leno said he’s hasn’t forgotten that COVID-19 is killing people and affecting the jobs of many others.

“When I have to go out, I try to pick a car that won’t offend people,” Leno said. “There are just certain vehicles you don’t want to be seen in, like a Lamborghini. You don’t want to look like the idiot son of a dictator. So to go to the store, I decided to drive my 1950 Plymouth Suburban. It was the first all-steel station wagon.”

Leno said when he got to the market, there were a lot of older people waiting in line to get in. The store was only allowing two people in at a time.

“As I pulled up to the market in my drab green Suburban station wagon, a lot of older people saw it and I learned that seeing something like that car could make people happy, even if only for a moment, in times like these.”

Leno said some young people who were also in line liked his car. One man said it was so much cooler than a modern sports car. “One young girl wanted to

know what a Plymouth was,” Leno said. “That got everyone over 60 laughing. But it shows how cars affect people. Even in a time like this, seeing a beautiful car can start a conversation. I guess people liked being reminded of better times.”

Leno said that Los Angeles normally has very congested roads and highways, but with the shutdown, the roads are clear and he has seen vehicles like a classic 1965 Mustang and even a DeLorean.

“It’s interesting to see these cars on the road,” Leno said. “It gives the place a different feel.”

The lack of traffic does make getting from place to place so much faster.

“I was watching one of those film noir detective movies from the 1950s a few days ago,” Leno said. “The detective was in Long Beach and talking to someone. He said he had to get to downtown Los Angeles. The person he was talking to said that would take 45 minutes. That made me laugh because under normal traffic conditions of today’s Los Angeles, that’s more than a two-hour drive.”

The COVID-19 crisis is happening at an interesting time for the auto industry, Leno said. It’s pretty much shut down everything at a time when OEMs like GM have been getting ready to launch new EV vehicles. Earlier this year, GMC announced it was going to release details of the new electric Hummer in June. This would be the first of five EVs launched between now and 2025. Who knows how this crisis will affect GM’s timetable?

“It’s funny GM released EV tech early, but released it too soon for the public,” Leno said. “I have always said for new technology to replace old tech, it has to be better. Not just as good, but better.”

He cited the example of the Mazda Wankel engine in the 1970s. It was different from the standard piston engine.

“It was a great engine, very modern,” Leno said. “But it wasn’t better than a piston engine, so people said why bother? I think Tesla cracked the code with EVs.

“Tesla is the biggest seller of luxury vehicles in the U.S. What do they sell? Something like 400,000 a year. That’s more than Mercedes or Porsche.”

Leno said he has confidence in American manufacturing might. He owned a Chevy Volt for several years and liked the car, calling it the perfect EV-hybrid.

“This was a car where you would never have to worry about running out of juice,” Leno said. “It had a range of about 50 miles, and I work 18 miles from my home. So I could drive it to work and let it charge while there. I could then drive it home and let it charge overnight.”

Leno said he only had to fill up the gas tank once a year.

“I would fill the tank on Dec. 6,” Leno said. “Even then it was not because the tank was in dan-



Leno met with Juechter in California to talk about GM’s development of its newest Corvette.

ger of being empty. Gas goes bad after about a year and I wanted to make sure I had good gas in the car. I put 80,000 miles on the vehicle and only had to change the oil twice because I mostly drove using the electrical system.”

Leno said that in 1949 Cadillac made the most luxurious car in the world.

At a time when Rolls Royce cars were still using hand-cranked windows, Cadillac was making cars with V8 engines, air conditioning, automatic windows and automatic transmissions.

“GM lost sight of that history, but over the past few years, Detroit manufacturers have really turned around their manufacturing. It’s gotten leaner and more efficient.”

He is very impressed with the most recent Chevy Corvette.

“I can’t believe they were able to make such a great sports car for \$59,995,” Leno said. “I thought that would be the base price and the ones with all the really cool features would cost more, but no, they did what they said they would do. If I were a European sports car maker, I’d be afraid. Just wait until you see what’s next.”

Leno said he’s had the chance to really drive the new Corvette. Recently, he went to GM’s Milford Proving Ground and met with Tadge Juechter, executive chief engineer at Corvette.

“We got in the car and were

wearing helmets,” Leno said. “I asked Tadge when was the last time he drove 200 mph in a Corvette.

“He said never. So I took the car around the Milford track and drove it going more than 200 mph for quite a distance.”

What really impressed Leno was the fact that even though they were going 200 mph, the car felt like it was going 70.

And they could have a normal conversation at the same time, Leno said.

“About 15 years ago, I was driving some Mercedes really fast on a track,” Leno said. “When we got close to 200 mph, you could really feel the car move around a little. But now you can drive a Corvette at 200 and it feels like 70. That shows you how much American manufacturing, engineering and design have improved.”

By making the Corvette a mass-production car, GM has also been able to take advantage of economies of scale, Leno said. He said a few years ago he was talking with representatives from a luxury tire maker about their new tires and graphite wheels. Each wheel cost in excess of \$20,000 and their customers were unnamed European supercar makers.

Four wheels cost more than today’s Corvette.

But GM has been able to use very similar tire/wheel technology on the new Corvette. And because it’s sold in high numbers,

the development costs can be split between 100,000 vehicles, not a few hundred.

That really puts the best auto tech in the hands of people who can’t afford a \$1 million supercar, Leno said.

Cars like the Mustang and the Dodge Hellcats use these parts, without putting the cost of the vehicles out of the range of many auto enthusiasts.

That’s something General Motors, Ford and FCA can be proud of, Leno said. Now a reasonably successful plumber can drive a car with attributes that used to be affordable only to the super-rich.

“I think EVs are the future,” Leno said. “I really believe that a child born today, when he starts driving, will be driving an EV. Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles will be like cars with stick shifts – only driven by real car fanatics. Regular people will be driving EVs.”

Leno said that his TV show, “Jay Leno’s Garage,” is currently shut down because California won’t allow gatherings of more than 25 people. So he and his crew will have to wait out the virus just like everyone else.

“But we were lucky because we have several episodes in the can,” Leno said. “I’m all right and have plenty to keep me busy. But I am looking forward to start filming again, once this is all over. And I look forward to returning to Detroit to make some segments.”



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