

Beyond Grand Rapids

Moving forward on VEBA

The United Auto Workers filed a proposed settlement of health-care claims against General Motors, paving the way for a union-run trust negotiated last year to manage retiree medical obligations.

“This is a procedural step but a historic moment,” said Harley Shaiken, a labor professor at the University of California at Berkeley. “It is meant to protect autoworkers in a very uncertain world.”

The union-run fund is known as a Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association, or VEBA. The VEBA at GM will pay health benefits for current and future GM retirees, and will have enough cash and assets to pay retiree benefits for 80 years, the UAW said.

Source: Bloomberg, February 22, 2008

Toyota's commitment to training

At Toyota's training center inside its Motomachi assembly complex in Japan, workers use golf balls to limber up their fingers before they learn new tasks on the factory floor.

Toyota sees the training centers – one here, and another in Georgetown, Ky., as well as more planned for elsewhere in the world – as an important tool as it gears up for its next major phase of growth.

With plants in 27 countries, more new factories under construction and workers speaking languages that include Russian and Turkish, Toyota's top executives are trying to replicate the company's success and operating principles in other countries.

“It's extremely important to have the same common Toyota Way infiltrated to employees in all corners of the world,” said Katsuaki Watanabe, the company's president.

More than 3,000 tasks on the assembly line have been translated into video manuals. The videos show everything from the correct way to hold a screw to the best way to hold an air gun so that a worker's hand will not tire in a few hours.

Toyota needs to act quickly. Next year, it expects to sell more than 10.4 million cars worldwide, double what it sold in 2000.

Source: The New York Times, February 22, 2008

Tahoe hybrid is a winner

Skepticism is healthy, but I approached the 2008 Chevrolet Tahoe hybrid SUV with outright cynicism. My expectations were so low you'd need a pooper scooper to lift them.

Man, was I wrong. Not “Oops, my bad” wrong. I was the-world-is-flat, man-will-never-fly wrong. I was 26.3-miles-per-gallon-in-three-ton-SUV wrong; and that's way wrong.

GM has redefined what's possible for hybrid drivetrains, and the evidence is on sale in the form of the 2008 Chevrolet Tahoe and GMC Yukon, with plenty more models to come. Nobody but GM makes a hybrid full-size SUV, so the Tahoe has no direct competitors. The only question is how well the unique system works. Based on my test, the only answer is: brilliantly.

Source: Mark Phelan, The Detroit Free Press, February 21, 2008

GM's Top 10 Markets, 2007

| | Industry Volume* | GM Volume* |
|---------------------|------------------|--------------|
| 1. United States | 16,474 | 3,867 |
| 2. China | 8,549 | 1,032 |
| 3. Brazil | 2,463 | 499 |
| 4. United Kingdom | 2,800 | 427 |
| 5. Canada | 1,691 | 404 |
| 6. Germany | 3,483 | 331 |
| 7. Russia | 2,709 | 259 |
| 8. Italy | 2,764 | 237 |
| 9. Mexico | 1,146 | 230 |
| 10. Spain | 1,939 | 171 |
| Total Top 10 | 44,018 | 7,454 |

*Volume stated in 000's

Organizational Changes

Rick Wagoner, GM chairman and chief executive officer, announced last week that the GM board of directors approved the following appointments, effective immediately:

- Fritz Henderson, vice chairman and chief financial officer, is elected president and chief operating officer.
- Ray Young, currently group vice president – finance, is elected executive vice president and chief financial officer, replacing Henderson.
- Tom Stephens, currently group vice president, global powertrain and global quality, is also elected executive vice president.



AutoKnow



Grand Rapids Metal Plant Mission Statement: Working within an empowered team environment and utilizing Quality Network/GM-GMS strategies, the people of GRMP will safely provide world-class products and services. The GRMP will be the preferred choice of our people, customers and stakeholders.

Unique Chopper Services GRMP

On Saturday, March 1, an S-64 Airplane, manufactured and operated by Erickson Air-Crane of Central Point, Oregon, hovered above the Grand Rapids Metal Plant, pulling five old air-handling units off our roof and placing two new ones on it. The units will be used for ventilation in the Epsilon area of the plant.

Scheduled to take four hours, the Erickson crew was quite efficient, finishing their work in just under an hour and a half. A smaller helicopter returned this past Sunday for several airlifts to drop ventilation duct work on our roof.

Erickson leases its airplanes worldwide to organizations, companies, and federal agencies for use in fire suppression, civil protection, heavy-lift construction, and timber harvesting. The American-made, twin-engine, heavy-lift helicopter is the civil version of the United States Army's CH-54 Tarhe. Its maiden flight took place on May 9, 1962.



Daily Startups Start This Week

Starting this past Monday, March 10, all teams are meeting for a couple of minutes at the beginning of their shift for what's called a “daily startup.” The startup is led by the team leader. A standard agenda focuses on current shift-specific details and the preceding shift's job-related safety and/or quality concerns.

Daily startups are a requirement of GMS under the Principle of People Involvement: “*There is a daily team meeting. Meetings are structured, with standard agenda and include reviews of the team, group and unit/company performance.*”

There are many benefits to these reviews, but primarily they result in the following:

- Ensure that all team members understand the day's priorities
- Build team unity and enthusiasm
- Keep team members up-to-date on changes that have taken place since their prior shift
- Help teams make informed decisions during the day and improve team performance

What's My Role?

Like any good team, a team member's role in these startups depends on his or her position:

Supervisor: Provide detail of the team's daily production requirements and schedules. Monitor absenteeism/vacations and replace production team members as required. Communicate other items of interest to team and/or team leader from the production meeting or other information sources.

Team Leader: Facilitate the daily startup. Gain team commitment by describing expectations in a way that provides clarity and interest. The team leader will be

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For Your Health--Free Guest Pass to YMCA

From any local YMCA branch, GM employees can receive the following:

- free, one-week family guest pass
- \$50 off joining fee (adult and family memberships) at the YMCA
- free orientation
- free body age assessment
- three free personal training sessions
- \$25 in corporate rewards

Visit any YMCA branch.

Get a brochure from the Center Communication Area

Free One-Week Family Guest Pass

Name: _____

Company Name: General Motors

Expires: April 12, 2008

Guest pass must be used within 30 days.

Daily Startups

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responsible to help plan and organize the following shift's startup by updating the Beginning of Shift Startup Agenda.

Team Member: Show respect by being at the daily startup on time and prepared for work. Be accountable by remembering the main issues discussed during the daily startup. Be responsible by applying the information to daily tasks to improve safety, quality and productivity.

The process for conducting daily startups will be reviewed 90 days from now. A joint group of employees will look for ways to improve the current process based on inefficiencies that are identified and recommendations that are made by team members, team leaders, and supervisors.

Safety Corner

The graphic below is being used to track our recordable injuries through the end of 2008.

From a personal perspective, our overall goal is to not have any more recordable injuries this year. That would mean that everyone is leaving work every day in the same condition in which they arrived.

From a strictly measurement perspective, we cannot have more than **24** additional recordable injuries between now and the end of the year if we want to meet our Recordable Injury Rate stretch goal of 2.20.



Know Safety, No Accidents

| | 2007 | Through 3/3/08 |
|----------------------|------|----------------|
| First-aid Injuries | 454 | 80 |
| Recordable Injuries | 65 | 10 |
| Lost Work Days | 6 | 0 |
| Near Misses Reported | 232 | 67 |



Daily startup meeting, 1st shift, March 10, 2008

Around Grand Rapids

UAW-GM Quality Network Employee Recognition

Congratulations to **George Sutfin**, pictured here. George was recognized by the Quality Network employee recognition process for going above and beyond as he strives to improve the performance on Z2 press. Z2 has shown considerable improvement in strokes per minute and line transitions. George is representative of GM's Core Values of *Teamwork and Continuous Improvement*. He works in Tech Support, 1st shift.



SAP Rollout Meetings

2008 SAP (Special Attrition Plan) rollout meetings for all hourly employees will be held March 17 and 18 in the parking garage. Employees are being scheduled by their area's superintendent. These meetings are mandatory and employees must scan in.

Child Care Corner: Fun Things to Do

Looking for something fun to do right now? Go to the State of Michigan's Travel and Recreation website <http://www.michigan.gov> and learn all about things to do and see, planning a trip in Michigan, events, and more. For a list of Grand Rapids events, go to http://www.grcvb.org/events-grand_ideas.php. Also, local libraries have events for the whole family. Go to www.kdl.org for more information or stop by your local library.

Retiree Bowls 300

GRMP retiree **Ken Brandt** (retired January 2007) bowled a 300 game at Park Center Lanes on 28th Street on February 28. Ken didn't do too badly for the series, either, bowling a three-game total of 781.

Fan washing this month

GRMP will be in possession of a Jan fan washer for the month of March, so please call **Brandon Taylor** (Nextel 65) or any other Maintenance supervisor if you'd like to have your fan washed.

UAW-GM QN Suggestion Corner

| | 02/23/08-02/29/08 | YTD |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| *Awards Paid: | 51 | 151 |
| \$ Paid Out: | \$ 4,444.40 | \$ 81,012.42 |
| Savings to GM: | \$ 12,347.15 | \$482,292.54 |

February Scorecard:

- Participation Rate: 41% (stamping average: 43%)
- Number more than 90 days old: 0 (stamping average: 7)

Tangible Awards Paid Last Week:

- An employee suggested a change to the equipment used to prepare concrete floors for new concrete capping. Changing from a rented roto mill to a plant-owned finish mill eliminated the need for carbide tips (\$12.28 each) and carbide holders (\$21.00). And because the roto mill has a self-contained vacuum system, it greatly reduced the amount of concrete dust created by the capping. Also, the roto mill removes less old concrete than does the rented mill. This results in (1) less floor cleanup, (2) no need to flood the floor with water and then vacuum up with a Sani Sweep, and (3) a smaller quantity of new concrete to replace the old.

*Tangible and intangible awards

Personnel Changes

Congratulations to **Lee Moyer** and **Amanda Hodges** on their new positions. Lee is moving from the position of CMM supervisor to the newly created position of production planner in Blanking. Amanda will replace Lee, moving from her former position of APQP/PPAP coordinator. These changes took effect on March 1.



Lee Moyer



Amanda Hodges