

# Beyond Grand Rapids

## Changes at Ford; Growth at Tata

The global auto industry will get a major new player when Indian conglomerate Tata buys Jaguar and Land Rover from Ford. The acquisition will transform Tata, which prides itself on building affordable vehicles that are fuel efficient and easy to service.

Tata Motors is part of the Tata Group, which had worldwide revenues of \$28.8 billion in its last fiscal year and accounts for 3.2% of India's gross domestic product.

Source: Detroit Free Press, March 5, 2008

## Cars lasting a lot longer

There's another obstacle to automobile sales in the U.S., which have declined more than 7% this decade: Vehicles last longer than they used to. The median age for trucks jumped to 7.3 years, the highest since 1998, while the median age of cars on U.S. roads remained at a record high of 9.2 years in 2007 for the second year in a row. That's up from 8.3 years for cars and 6.9 years for trucks (including commercial vehicles) in 2000.

Forty-one percent of cars are at least 11 years old.

Source: Chicago Tribune, February 22, 2008

## 2008 Cobalt SS is praised by Popular Mechanics

Popularmechanics.com praises the 2008 Cobalt SS as "GM's best sports compact ever." The website adds that "at \$22,995, it's a performance bargain."

Source: popularmechanics.com, March 12, 2008

## Foreign invasion of vehicles?

The first drops of a coming wave of new vehicles are splashing on U.S. shores.

- In January, SmartUSA (Europe), began delivering the first several thousand of its two-seat Smart fortwo.
- This week, Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. (India) will begin production in India of two pickups and an SUV for the U.S. market. The vehicles are expected to be in showrooms in the summer of 2009.
- Fiat SpA wants to bring its European economy car, the Fiat 500, back to America.
- Chamco Auto (China), said it plans to import pickups and SUVs into the U.S. in 2009.
- Chrysler LLC is working with China's biggest automaker, Chery International, on a small-car line to be built in China and exported to America.

Source: Toledo Blade, March 13, 2008

## Getting past excuses to win back a customer who has written us off

The next time someone says to you, "GM makes only gas guzzlers," tell them the real story. Tell them that a lot has changed -- that GM has improved passenger fleet fuel economy by 75% in the last 30 years:

- GM has more models that get over 30 miles per gallon on the highway than any other manufacturer.
- In the 2008 model year, GM will offer 11 different E-85 FlexFuel models, and five hybrids -- from mid-size sedans to full-size SUVs.
- GM is getting ready to begin the first-ever meaningful market test of hydrogen fuel cell vehicles anywhere -- with the world's largest fuel-cell fleet.

## Volt price to reflect lithium-ion battery

General Motors, aiming to sell a rechargeable hybrid-electric car by 2010, said the price of its Chevrolet Volt sedan will need to reflect relatively high warranty expenses to cover the lithium-ion batteries.

"We are going to bake in a very substantial warranty cost for the battery in our overall pricing calculation," Vice Chairman Bob Lutz said. "We need to be conservative, simply because it's the first time we've done anything like this."

GM is betting it can build a lithium-ion battery pack able to deliver at least 40 miles of all-electric driving range before the Volt needs a recharge from an onboard engine or household outlet. GM's goal is to make the Volt one of the highest-volume electric autos.

Last month Lutz said Detroit-based GM won't meet an initial goal of selling the Volt for less than \$30,000.

The Volt's 300-pound battery pack will be among its most-expensive components. Menahem Anderman, a battery analyst based in Oregon House, California, has estimated each such lithium-ion pack may cost about \$10,000.

Source: Bloomberg, March 14, 2008

## Stock price hits historic low

Shares of General Motors and Ford sank to historic levels late last week after Morgan Stanley Research cut its earnings forecasts based on a lowered outlook for U.S. auto sales.

Ford stock fell to its lowest level since 1985 and the price of GM stock fell to its lowest level since April 2006, near the height of speculation that the automaker would need to declare bankruptcy if it didn't speed up its turnaround.

Source: Detroit Free Press, March 14, 2008



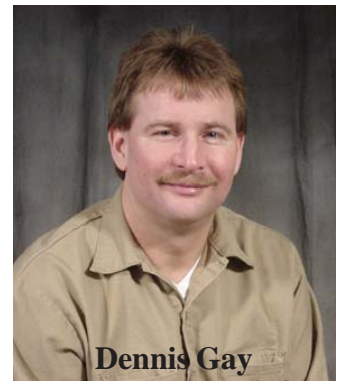
# AutoKnow



General Motors Cultural Priorities: Enhance Our Product and Customer Focus, Act as One Company, Embrace Stretch Targets, Move With a Sense of Urgency

## PMN Supervisor, Support Person of the Month

Congratulations to **Dennis Gay**, who was named February Supervisor of the Month by the Grand Rapids Metal Plant Professional Managers Network (PMN). Dennis was given this award because he "is a team player who functions in several different roles: Tech Support, Maintenance, and Production. Dennis is quick to respond and always maintains a great team attitude." Dennis, who is a Maintenance Planner on third shift, represents GM's Core Values of Customer Enthusiasm, Integrity, Teamwork, and Individual Respect and Responsibility.



Dennis Gay

Congratulations also to **Chad Alvord**, who was named February Support Person of the Month by the Grand Rapids Metal Plant PMN. Chad was given this award because he, "along with UAW partner **Raul Espinoza**, continues to drive better understanding of GMS into the organization through his enthusiasm and excellent teamwork skills. Chad displays a willingness to help others and has provided a disciplined approach to coordinating the gap closure of the True Green Wall core requirement initiatives." Chad is GRMP's salaried GMS co-lead.



Chad Alvord

## Planning your retirement

Now that the UAW and GM have announced the Special Attrition Program, the big question for a lot of employees is: "What is my plan for retirement?"

There is a lot more to planning a retirement than just looking at the financials. Make sure you are ready to retire, both emotionally and financially, before you make any final decisions. Here are a few things to consider:

- Are you ready to change your routine? Instead of working set hours on a daily basis, retirement allows you to do a wide variety of activities that you want to do.
- Look at your family situation. Is your spouse ready to retire or close to retiring? Do you want to spend more time with grandkids or elderly parents?
- Retirement gives you 40+ hours of time to do what you want. Will you start a home-based business? Coach your grandkids' team? Take up a hobby? Volunteer at church or a community organization?
- Choose what to do with your retirement plan savings. As you near retirement, you will be making important decisions about what to do with the assets in your workplace savings plans, including pensions, 401(k)'s, 403(b)'s, and 457(b)'s. Set up a meeting with your financial planner or utilize web-based resources.

Everyone dreams about what they want to do in retirement, but the first step to living those dreams is determining your retirement game plan.

## Take a Walk for March of Dimes

The March of Dimes has changed the name of its premiere fundraising event (the annual walk) to March for Babies. It's a great change because it makes clear exactly who people are walking for--all babies.

This year's walk in Grand Rapids takes place on Saturday, April 26, 9:00 a.m. at Foremost

Insurance. If you would like to be part of a Grand Rapids Metal Plant team and sign up to walk, then please call **Larry Melville** (3112) or **Mike Vincent** (3188).

Although the name of the walk has changed, the mission has not. March of Dimes continues to work at improving the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature births, and infant mortality.

### March of Dimes Facts:

- 88 cents of every dollar donated goes toward March of Dimes' mission.
- Every minute of every day a baby is born prematurely.
- The organization has allocated more than \$24 million for national research to save babies.
- It has distributed educational materials that have reached 12 million women of childbearing age with messages on reducing their risk of premature birth.



### Safety Corner

From a strictly measurement perspective, we cannot have more than **24** additional recordable injuries between now and the end of 2008 if we want to meet our Recordable Injury Rate stretch goal of 2.20.



### Please Use Pedestrian Crosswalks

I would like all of us to use the designated pedestrian crosswalks as part of our everyday walk patterns. These crossings are a visual control to our forklift drivers and mobile equipment operators, indicating to them that these are areas to be looking for pedestrians who cross our busy aisles. Our PIV (Pedestrian & Industrial Vehicle) joint committee is evaluating installing orange, flexible "stick cones" to better identify these pedestrian crossings. We'll test this on the main aisle in the near future. Remember, in terms of weight, being hit by a forklift is like being hit by five cars!

### Know Safety, No Accidents

	2007	Through 3/14/08
First-aid Injuries	454	101
Recordable Injuries	65	11
Lost Work Days	6	0
Near Misses Reported	232	85

## Pay Phones to be Removed From GRMP Next Month

It might not be long before people see a picture of a pay phone and ask, "What's that?" At the end of this year AT&T will put an end to a 129-year era when it exits the pay phone business. This will affect AT&T's 65,000 pay phones. BellSouth, now a part of AT&T, dropped out of this business in 2001. Why not, when the number of pay phones across the industry has dropped by about 1.6 million since 1998.

As part of its strategy to remove itself from operating pay phones, AT&T is pulling all ten pay phones from the Grand Rapids Metal Plant on April 1 and 2. None of these ten phones does more than an average of \$6.00 per day (an average of \$2.66 per phone daily), which is considered to be a very low usage rate. If we were to keep these phones operational, it would cost us \$75 per phone per month. This equates to a \$9,000 cost avoidance.



# Around Grand Rapids

**Grand Rapids Metal Center**

Quality Network

**Reminder**

**GM-GMS Calibration**

**begins**

**May 12, 2008**

**38 more days!**

**Are you and your team prepared?**

### Want to See the Futurliner?

Here's a schedule of where the Futurliner will be showcased in 2008:

June 1, 2008	CCCA Nat'l Meet, Red Barns, Hickory Corners, MI
June 27-28, 2008	Sloan Summer Fair, Flint, MI
July 4-6, 2008	Haggerty, Traverse City, MI
August 17, 2008	Pebble Beach, CA
August 22-23, 2008	Metro-Cruise, Grand Rapids, MI



### Very Safe Year for South Maintenance

In the February 20 *AutoKnow* we told you that 25 first-shift millwrights in WFG and all WEMRs worked all of 2007 without a single recordable injury. We've learned of a third group: 3rd-shift South Maintenance did, as well. Zero recordables! We'll repeat what we said in that *AutoKnow*: Perfect safety records such as these don't occur by "accident." Instead, avoiding serious injuries is the result of paying attention to details, watching out for one another, wearing the right PPE, reporting near misses, and following established safety policies and procedures.

### Personnel Changes

We'd like you to welcome **Scot Nemecek** to the Grand Rapids Metal Plant. Scot, currently superintendent of general assembly at Lansing Delta Township, is transferring here to become superintendent of north press on second shift. With Scot's arrival, **Kathy Coslow** will be moving to the position of north press superintendent on third shift.

### UAW-GM QN Suggestion Corner

	02/23/08-02/29/08	YTD
*Awards Paid:	25	176
\$ Paid Out:	\$ 18,934.08	\$ 99,946.50
Savings to GM:	\$120,188.05	\$602,480.59

### Safety Suggestions:

- A mirror at the unload job on the right-hand door line (Metal Assembly) has duct tape covering the edge. The suggestion is to put a safety strip around the edge of the mirror so no one gets cut.
- A potential pinch point hazard exists at the W floor pan line in Metal Assembly. The suggestion is to remove a bracket, which will eliminate the pinch point.

People are walking through 4-Bay wearing short sleeves to access a time clock at column C-7. 4-Bay is a restricted area, and people are putting themselves in harm's way when using it as a walkthrough. The suggestion is to either remove the time clock or move it to a safer location.

### Tangible Awards Paid Last Week:

- *Maximum Award:* An employee suggested that software be developed and installed in all PLC-controlled presses throughout GM's stamping division in order to automatically adjust the slide counterbalance air pressure to balance the slide with the installed dies. The previous method of setting the slide counterbalance air was a somewhat random, "hit or miss" effort.

Implementing this suggestion will save downtime for repairs, many hours of manpower, the cost of new press parts to replace those that are damaged, and lost production. It will also result in improved quality, material savings, and overall cost reduction.

\*Tangible and intangible awards

### No AutoKnow

There will be no *AutoKnow* next week, March 26.