

# Beyond Grand Rapids

## Cadillac makes a better car than BMW, Mercedes, Lexus, etc

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "Cadillac makes a better car than BMW or Mercedes or Lexus or Infiniti, and that car is the 2008 CTS. No other car in the mass market, with so much at stake for its makers, dares so much as this expressive and audacious bit of automotive avant-gardism. In a segment that lives and dies by European benchmarks, the CTS sets fire to the bench and throws it through the shopkeepers' window."

"For now, it's time to celebrate. Cadillac has built a ripping car here — fast, fun, exuberant in style and substance. To the extent that imitation of one product concedes the superiority of another, the CTS surrenders not an inch. It feels like a fundamentally self-defined car. Chalk one up for the home team."

Source: The Los Angeles Times, December 12, 2007

### Competitive Sales Chart

#### Market Share

	Jan. '08 vs. Jan. '07	Jan. '08 vs. Jan. '07
Industry	1,070,000 (-5.2%)	100%
GM	252,565 (+2.1%)	23.7% (+0.5 pts.)
Toyota	172,341 (-2.2%)	16.2% (+0.5 pts.)
Ford	159,914 (-4.1%)	15.0 (+0.2 pts.)
Chrysler	137,392 (-12.1%)	12.9% (-1.0 pts.)
Honda	98,511 (-2.3%)	9.2% (+0.2 pts.)
Nissan	76,855 (-7.1%)	7.2% (-0.2 pts.)

## Patriotic pitches aren't working

It might be that "green" marketing doesn't leave room for the red, white and blue. Or perhaps the idea is just in a lull. But whatever the reasons, the use of "Made in America" themes in car marketing seems to be at a generational low these days.

"Consumers buy a product because they want that product and the benefits of it, such as quality, design and engineering," said Toyota marketing executive Steve Sturm. "And if it's built in America, that's just another part of the product proposition. It's not the first or second premise but part of the overall proposition."

Only 17% of consumers in a TNS research company survey said they were influenced positively by whether a vehicle is union-made. That finding illustrates the clear fracture in the traditional tight relationship between domestic manufacturing and union workforces.

Source: Edmunds.com, February 18, 2008

## Chrysler offering less?

Chrysler is laying out a turnaround plan based on a radical idea: Offering a smaller number of models will lead to bigger profits.

Over the next three years or so, the automaker plans to drop as many as half of the roughly 30 models it now produces, a move likely to cut sales at least for a while.

"We're going to be the best little car company in America," Chrysler Vice Chairman Jim Press said.

The company believes it can be more profitable if it spends money producing fewer, but better, vehicles. The current product line includes cars and trucks that are essentially identical products, differentiated only by their brands. It makes two minivans, the Chrysler Town & Country and Dodge Caravan, that compete for the same customers.

Source: The Wall Street Journal, February 11, 2008

## Experts underestimate GM

About six of every 10 new GM vehicles are now sold overseas.

"The market had underestimated GM's ability to grow," said Lehman Brothers analyst Brian Johnson in New York. He said the company is poised to outpace the industry in some of the fastest-growing auto markets, including China and Latin America.

Toyota has focused most of its expansion in North America, which accounts for 30% of global sales. It is playing catch-up to GM throughout Asia and eastern Europe. General Motors is also ahead of Toyota in India and outsells its Japanese competitor by more than 2-to-1 in China.

Source: Bloomberg, February 11, 2008



# AutoKnow



General Motors Core Values: Customer Enthusiasm, Continuous Improvement, Integrity, Teamwork, Innovation, Individual Respect & Responsibility.

## Guidelines for Emergency Vacation Call-in Requests

The February 13, 2008, issue of the *AutoKnow* explained the jointly agreed upon guidelines for calling in to make an emergency vacation request, which became effective February 18. As the front-page article indicated, the guidelines apply only for those "emergency" cases when something arises between the end of your shift one day and your next scheduled day that causes you to determine you will not be at work that next shift.

Please remember that requesting time off from work should still be scheduled in advance. This preferred method, commonly referred to as "rule of thumb," may be defined as meaning that an employee should have an approved vacation slip prior to leaving work on the shift preceding the absence. Employees need to submit a written vacation request slip in a timely manner to management, and in turn, management needs to get the response back to the employee in a timely fashion.

The full explanation of this emergency request process can be found in the document

"Emergency Vacation Call-in Requests," which is found on the S drive at S:/public/all employee access/autoknow-supv.packet/Emergency Vacation Call-in Requests.



## Near Misses--Catching Close Calls in Grand Rapids

As we said in the February 20 *AutoKnow*, a "near miss" is an undesired event that, under slightly different circumstances, could have resulted in harm to people or damage to property, materials or the environment. Only a fortunate break in the chain of events prevented an injury, fatality or damage. Perhaps a more common term for such events is a "close call."

Since that *AutoKnow* article, employees here in Grand Rapids have been making some good close call catches:

1. *Near Miss:* Employees noticed that access to a fire hose was obstructed.  
*Solution:* Red lines were painted on the floor so nothing would be put there to block the hose in the future.
2. *Near Miss:* A Maintenance employee went to tape up some matting between two turntables. As he attempted to lock out the turntables, he noticed that the north turntable had no provision for lockout. He then locked out the south turntable. When he attempted to verify the lockout, the turntable still worked. He found that the turntable was fed from two different compressed air sources and he had locked out only one.  
*Solution:* Lockout valves were added to the north turntable, and one of the air supplies to the south turntable was disconnected.
3. *Near Miss:* Two crane service electricians were completing preventative maintenance (PM) on the overhead crane at W-Line (13-bay). Once the employees completed the PM, they were walking back to the 12/13 bay crane access ladder. The crane crew in 12 bay had taken the crane to complete a die set. When the electricians went to use the shared platform (service catwalk), the crane was gone, which left the

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## Million-Mile Truck

The following appeared on Socrates.

I own a “once in a century” truck. It’s powered by one of the truly legendary engines in automotive history -- the small block Chevy. Mine is the 350 engine. It’s a 1991 Chevy Silverado. She’s my only vehicle, my do-everything truck, and she’s poised to make history. What might that be you ask? My “old girl” is less than 6,000 miles short of ONE MILLION MILES!

Yes, you read that correctly! One million miles driven, and that’s not the best part. The engine has never been opened up! My “old girl” has never been overhauled. She sports the original gaskets, seals and engine bearings. The valve covers have not



been off the engine and she still has the original timing chain! (I welcome GM’s Engineers to examine my engine.)

I’m in the seafood business. My suppliers are in Chicago, and my customers are spread out

across Wisconsin, Illinois, and the Upper Peninsula – I drive about 85,000 miles a year (towing a trailer when bringing seafood back from Illinois – sometimes 30 to 35 times a year.) With all this driving she has never let me down.

With all the miles piled up you would think that I would have doubts or uncertainty when I go on long trips, but I never have. She always has brought me and my product back safely. Bomber pilots, during WWII, always spoke of their planes with great affection, using feminine pronouns. “She took us on a dangerous mission,” “she brought us back safely,” etc. That’s how I feel about “MY OLD GIRL.”

I’m on my fourth radiator, third gas tank, and my fifth transmission went last December. I’ve got about 400,000 miles on my sixth water pump. When the engine was built in Flint, it was assembled perfectly. I bought the truck in June 1996. I’ve had 300 oil changes.

As a one-man operation, it has been a real challenge to make a go of it, but through it all my truck has been the one truly dependable constant.

## 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 23 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.



## Rules for Power Tools:

1. Read and follow instructions about the proper use of every power tool you operate
2. Take care to keep electrical cords away from heat, oil and sharp edges
3. Never use an electric-powered tool in a wet environment unless it is approved for that use
4. Disconnect power tools when not in use and when servicing them or changing accessories

## Know Safety, No Accidents

	2007	Through 2/26/08
First-aid Injuries	454	62
Recordable Injuries	65	12
Lost Work Days	6	0
Near Misses Reported	232	53

# Around Grand Rapids

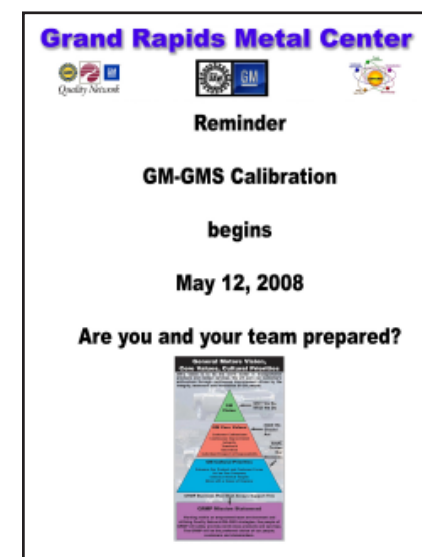
## Grand Rapids Hosts Visionary Workshop

Grand Rapids Metal Plant recently hosted GM’s first-ever Visionary Continuous Improvement Workshop. GMS representatives from around the corporation gathered to discuss what GM plants have to offer that might be adopted as best practices in terms of GMS implementation.

Grand Rapids was chosen primarily because of the creative work we’re doing here with the following:

- **GMS “True Green” Wall/Change Process--** located in the Center Communications Area, the wall tracks our progress on GMS implementation, as well as coaches and teaches GMS core requirements to plant GMS subject-matter experts
- **Business Plan Deployment--**the alignment of our Level 1, Level 3, and Level 5 BPD boards and their support of the GRMP Mission Statement
- **Team/Group Leader Book--**designed to help team leaders and supervisors perform their jobs
- **Problem Solving--**particularly our formal process for prioritizing problems

This two-day workshop included 37 participants from Spring Hill, Oshawa, Grand Blanc, Indianapolis, Shreveport, Lordstown, Mansfield, Marion, Wentzville, Parma, Fairfax, Pontiac and corporate headquarters. The group made many positive comments about Grand Rapids and were particularly



impressed with the joint relationship here, as well as the joint commitment to GMS.

GRMP employees who were involved included **Garry Aernouts, Chad Alvord, Jane Boersma, Craig Coulson, Dean Counselman, Bob Cunningham, Raul Espinoza, Larry Givens, Jim Heist, Kyle Hinton, Nick Kassanos, Max Miller, Pat Reed, Dan Scott, Shawanda Smith, and Renay Stocking.**

## UAW-GM QN Suggestion Corner

	02/16/08-02/22/08	YTD
*Awards Paid:	26	100
\$ Paid Out:	\$ 47,655.45	\$ 76,568.42
Savings to GM:	\$324,776.11	\$469,945.39

### Tangible Awards Paid Last Week:

- (1) An employee suggested putting an extra three loads of a part into each rack, meaning fewer racks are needed.

\*Tangible and intangible awards

## Near Misses

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end of the service catwalk wide open, exposing the employees to an approximate 32-36 foot fall. The employees immediately reported the near miss. **Solution:** During the Incident Investigation it was determined that the safety gates are positioned on the end of the crane catwalks, not on the end of the service catwalks. When the crane moves up and down the bay, the end of the service catwalks are left open/unguarded. There are a total of 36 access points, and 26 of these require additional guarding to prevent potential falls. The guarding is now being installed.

## 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.

Did you know . . . that the idea behind this fan cleaning machine came from a suggestion submitted by a GRMP employee? You should, because we told you in the February 20 *AutoKnow*: An employee pointed out that we needed a better way to clean fans, so he suggested that GM buy a fan cleaning machine from Jan Fan, Inc., and that the machine be used at other GM locations, too. This suggestion is saving GM \$86,525.79!