

EcoCAR2 Competition Begins in June

by Christine Snyder
Staff Reporter
Tech Center News

Detroit is not only home of the automotive industry, Wayne State University wants to prove it is home to the electric vehicle industry as well.

Wayne State University (WSU) was the only Michigan university chosen for EcoCAR2, the second cycle of the prestigious collegiate three-year competition that builds on the Department of Energy's 23 years of advanced vehicle technology competitions.

The competition challenges students to take a GM-donated car and modify it to reduce fuel consumption and emissions without compromising performance and safety.

EcoCAR2, dubbed "Plugging into the Future," will begin in June after EcoCAR1 winds down.

Jerry Ku, graduate director of electric drive engineering and co-director of the alternative technology departments at WSU, said WSU is uniquely qualified for the competition.

WSU is the first university to provide degree programs in electric drive engineering. WSU's College of Engineering offers a bachelor's degree in electrical transportation and a master's degree and graduate certificate programs in electric-drive vehicle engineering.

"We set up this program and EcoCAR2 would be a very good complement and enhancement for our students," said Ku. "They can learn from the classroom the curriculum we developed with the faculty and advisors and industry, and on the other hand we actually have this project where the students would be doing almost identical things as they would be when they got hired into the industry."

The hands-on experience is invaluable, said Ku.

"The three-year project allows the university students to have an opportunity to apply what they learned from the classrooms," said Ku. "This is very good pre-job training. I've heard from others in the program that the students in this project are targets for recruitment."

GM is the major sponsor for the project and Ku said having GM and other sponsors in WSU's background makes it convenient.

"They are all in Detroit," said Ku, who added that part of the arrangement is for the sponsors to not only provide and donate software and hardware, but mentoring and technical support.

"So, being in Detroit in the local university makes it logistically a lot easier for us to tap into those resources."



GM will donate Chevrolet Malibu to universities tapped to participate in the three-year competition EcoCAR2. Wayne State University was the only Michigan university chosen for the Department of Energy program.

Chrysler Town & Country Minivan Now Paving 'Road to Literacy' Via Facebook

AUBURN HILLS – The Chrysler Brand is helping to make a difference toward improving literacy one test drive at a time with the launch of the new "Road to Literacy" Facebook campaign. The "Road to Literacy" program enlists the help of consumers to participate in the program via Facebook and test drives of the 2011 Chrysler Town & Country minivan at their local dealer. The Chrysler Brand will donate up to 150,000 books to schools across the country. To participate, consumers can visit the "Road to Literacy" Facebook page at <http://apps.facebook.com/road-to-literacy/>.

"The Chrysler Brand believes in the importance of educating our young people as they are next generation of leaders, scientists, engineers and designers. Books are a source of education and inspiration and help to introduce children to new countries and ideas in a fun and engaging manner," said Olivier Fran-

cois, President and CEO, Chrysler Brand, Chrysler Group LLC.

"We hope that schools across the country will encourage their students and parents to join us in these efforts toward improving literacy and help donate 150,000 books to their school of choice and especially to schools in need."

To participate, visit the "Road to Literacy" Facebook page at <http://apps.facebook.com/road-to-literacy/> and click on the "Donate Books" tab.

Each participant will be asked to enter the school they would like to receive the book donation. Once the school has been selected, consumers can choose a local dealer to complete a test drive of the 2011 Chrysler Town & Country.

Once the test drive at the local dealer is complete, the participant will be given a "unique donation dealer code" to be entered on the Facebook site. Once the code

is entered by the participant, five books will be sent to their school of choice and five books will be sent to a school in need. The Chrysler Town & Country Facebook page offers a tracking tool to monitor the book donation progress and see which school is logging the most donations.

The "Road to Literacy" campaign runs through June 1 and any school (pre-school - high school) in the U.S. is eligible and encouraged to join the program. To register for the program, visit the Chrysler Town & Country Facebook page (www.facebook.com/ChryslerTownandCountry) and click on the "Donate Books" tab to submit the name of school to receive the book donation and find the nearest Chrysler dealership to test drive the 2011 Chrysler Town & Country.

Chrysler said that participants are able to encourage others to join in the efforts by sharing the promotion with their friends and family on Facebook.

Taurus Marketer Takes the Long View

DEARBORN – Pei-Wen Hsu spends an inordinate amount of time interacting with Ford Taurus customers, peppering them with questions and contemplating their responses to better understand their immediate and future wants and needs.

"While the completely reinvented 2010 Taurus was still in the initial phases of the launch cycle, we set out to better understand buyer motivations," said Hsu.

"We conducted research clinics in the New York metro area, not just to better understand why they chose Taurus, but also to determine what they really liked about the car and what areas they felt could be improved."

And what did Hsu and her team take away from this experience?

"Buyers told us Taurus had transcended being a family sedan and now represented their reward for achieving personal and professional

success," she said.

"Customers no longer buy full-size sedans because they need to, they buy them because they want them. These are savvy consumers who want style, performance and technology, but they're unwilling to pay the 'brand tax' for a European luxury sedan."

Hsu discovered the reinvented Taurus was attracting customers in transition from other segments such as sport utility vehicles and premium imported sedans. Moreover, Taurus was attracting customers who had previously owned other luxury makes, like BMW.

"We found that they were attracted to the Taurus design," said Hsu. "Once they drove the Taurus, the blend of performance, craftsmanship and technology sealed the deal. From our time with customers, we also gleaned several insights to help continuously refine the vehicle."

Understanding the desires

of a diverse group of buyers comes easily to Hsu. A native of Taiwan, she earned her undergraduate degree at the prestigious National Taiwan University in Taipei. She went on to earn her MBA at Duke University in North Carolina.

Hsu brings a passionate approach to her work, she said recently.

"I've got the best job in the company," Hsu said. "Talking to customers about the car they love is incredibly rewarding and motivating, inspiring us to create more vehicles that will excite them."

The 2013 Taurus, of course, debuted to rave reviews during media days at the New York Auto Show last week.

AIDS Partnership Director Appreciates Big Three

by Gerald Scott
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Barbara Murray, executive director of the AIDS Partnership Michigan office in Detroit, was on the phone the other day talking about the retrenchments that non-profits such as hers have suffered since the 2008-09 economic downturn.

Not only have foundations and corporations cut back on their charitable grants, but live attendance at pay-as-you-go fund-raising events has waned somewhat, too.

AIDS-PM is hosting Summer Solstice III, a jazz and wine fund-raiser on Saturday, June 11, at the Michigan Design Center in Troy.

"We typically get between 200 - 300 people, this is our keystone fund-raising event," Murray said.

"We certainly get GM people and Ford people at this one. . . . but everybody's invited to stop by and help us out. It's a fun event and supports a good cause, of course. This is our 'big dog' (fund-raiser) for the year."

She added that a number of Big Three executives have hosted various fund-raisers, such as walk-a-thons, and that GM and Ford design and engineering staffs typically turn

out for their fancier soirees like the upcoming event at the Michigan Design Center.

One of the reasons for the Big Three support is the host site, the Michigan Design Center itself.

Everyone is welcome to visit Michigan Design Center. Located at 1700 Stutz Dr. in Troy, they invite the public to explore their 30-plus showrooms and discover over 1,000 of the most exclusive names in finer home furnishings.

Big Three designers frequently visit there to absorb ideas and trends from the facility's home displays and then those trends are occasionally applied to automotive, particularly car interiors, including fabrics, styles, colors, patterns, etc.

Should you wish to purchase products from any showroom, the sales staff within each showroom is happy to assist you.

Michigan Design Center is not a retail center and each showroom at MDC sets its own operating policies. Due to the special-order nature of many products, some showrooms may suggest you purchase through a design professional and many have designers on staff to assist you. MDC also has designers available, on-site each day, to sup-

port your purchase as the need arises.

Meanwhile, Solstice III is hosted by Baker and runs from 6:30 to 10 p.m. and features summer chic attire. Entertainment is by Ben Sharkey, there will be wine, a strolling dinner, dancing and an auction. Tickets are \$95 per person, all proceeds benefit the charity. Visit aidspartnership.org for more details on tickets and event information.

Murray points out that as the state's leading AIDS organization, AIDS Partnership Michigan has been dedicated to preventing the spread of HIV for 27 years.

"We offer a range of services statewide and in Detroit, from testing to counseling to answering questions on our hotline," Murray said.

Located on E. Jefferson Ave. a few blocks from GM's RenCen headquarters in downtown Detroit, Murray says that AIDS-PM is on the front lines of fighting a disease that has killed 25 million people and infected 33 million others since it first emerged back in 1981.

Generally speaking, AIDS went from being a proverbial "death sentence" back in the 1980s to a manageable disease and condition by the mid-1990s, when those so-

joys the highest conquest rate in its segment – currently running above 57 percent after two years on sale. This means Taurus SHO with EcoBoost power has drawn new and different customers to the Ford showroom.

Ford is also seeing Taurus SHO being cross-shopped against BMW 5- and 3-Series models, Acura RL, and Cadillac STS and CTS variants. A full 57 percent of SHO buyers traded in non-Ford Motor Company vehicles, with 28 percent trading in a luxury brand vehicle.

A key contributor to EcoBoost fuel efficiency is direct injection of gasoline. This system precisely delivers a fine mist of fuel directly into each cylinder for optimal performance, economy and emissions. Unlike port-fuel-injection (PFI) engines that spray fuel in the intake system, the direct-injection system puts the fuel exactly where it needs to be for combustion.

A high-pressure injector is positioned to the side of each cylinder, aiming the fuel directly into the cylinder adjacent to a high-intensity spark plug and alongside the intake and exhaust valves. Fuel is sprayed into the cylinders at pressures of up to 2,150 pounds per square inch (psi), which is about 35 times more intense than PFI injection.

Ford EcoBoost engines made their North American debut with the completely reinvented 2010 Ford Taurus SHO. Turbocharged EcoBoost power was the linchpin in the reincarnation of this iconic sport sedan.

EcoBoost is fundamental to Ford's objective to provide the horsepower and torque of larger, normally aspirated engines while delivering the uncompromised fuel efficiency of a smaller engine.

Key elements to enable this balance of responsive power and fuel economy include gasoline direct injection and turbocharging. EcoBoost is a key pillar of Ford's plan to deliver affordable fuel economy for millions of drivers, while providing an engaging and responsive dynamic driving experience.

Ford Car Colors Change with Location in U.S.

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most drivers in Norway, Portugal, Germany and Russia. And, besides Ireland, Romania, Finland, Poland and Sweden chose silver more times than not.

"Red used to be, far and away, the most popular color," said Vince Show, marketing and product strategy manager for Ford of Europe. "White is in the ascendancy now. Dark grays, blacks and blues are popular, as they are in men's or women's clothing."

"It's important to get the right color into the market at the right time," Swek said. "Too early, and it won't have registered on customers' radar. Too late, and the popularity of a particular color may have already reached its peak."

These findings are from Ford's annual look at U.S. car buying preferences, as well as an international color study by Du Pont.