

## Detroit-Chicago Gets High-Speed Rail

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U.S. Auto Scene

Ready or not, here comes high-speed rail to the Detroit-Chicago corridor.

A bevy of federal, state and local officials visited the Detroit Amtrak Station in New Center last week to announce a federal grant of almost \$200 million to kick-start high-speed rail here in the Midwest.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, U.S. Sens. Carl Levin and Debbie Stabenow, Gov. Rick Snyder and Mayor Dave Bing were on hand at the corner of Woodward and Baltimore, site of the local Amtrak station, for the big announcement.

"Transportation has always been bi-partisan and today is the classic example of it in Michigan and Detroit," LaHood said.

"I hope the taxpayers feel with a great sense of pride... a bipartisan group cares about one thing - creating jobs and putting Michiganders to work.

"Today, President Obama's administration and the Department of Transportation are awarding over \$2 billion in grants for 22 high-speed rail projects in 15 states - including \$200 million for Michigan."

The well-attended press con-

ference broke out in cheers at the news of advancing high-speed rail, which LaHood said should increase Detroit - Chicago rail speeds up to 110 mph (on select portions of the route) and otherwise shave about 30 minutes off the current trip.

DOT's Federal Railroad Administration selected 15 states and Amtrak to receive \$2.02 billion for 22 high-speed intercity passenger rail projects as part of a nationwide network that will connect 80 percent of American to high-speed rail within the next 25 years.

Overall, this series of grants will actually provide \$404.1 million to expand high-speed rail service across the Midwest.

Newly constructed segments of 110-mph-compatible track between Detroit and

Chicago will save passengers 30 minutes in actual travel time and otherwise help create 1,000 new jobs in the construction phase alone.

Related upgrades to the Chicago to St. Louis corridor will shave significant time off that trip as well, enhancing safety and growing ridership all at the same time, LaHood and DOT officials said.

Meanwhile, it was noted that Detroit is also scheduled to begin construction on a Woodward Avenue to 8 Mile Road intra-city light rail line and officials at the Amtrak press conference pointed out that this project is still on track and it is supported by a different set of federal funds.

The Detroit - Chicago high speed rail line makeover could be completed as early as 2013 or 2014, officials said.



The U.S. Department of Transportation has allocated almost \$200 million to initiate high-speed rail Amtrak service between Detroit and Chicago. It should be available in 2013 or 2014.

## Chevy Cruze Eco's Special Tires Save Owners \$112 a Year in Fuel Costs

DETROIT - With gas prices near or exceeding \$4 a gallon, the efforts of GM engineers to boost fuel economy on the Chevrolet Cruze Eco compact are adding up.

GM tire development engineer Chuck Lantz and his team worked with tire manufacturers to produce an industry benchmark tire that boosts fuel efficiency by three miles per gallon on the Chevy Cruze Eco. That's about 38 extra miles on a tank of fuel and a savings of about \$112 per year for the average driver.

"This tire is way beyond anything in its category," said Lantz. The Cruze Eco tires make use of special polymers built into the tread compound to reduce rolling resistance, which means less energy is required to keep the tire moving.

So, what makes the tire unique? Typically, improving one facet of tire performance like rolling resistance requires sacrifices in other areas like traction in snow and stopping distance. Not so with the leading-edge Cruze Eco tires.

"Thanks to the high-tech polymers we used, we were able to create a high-MPG set of tires without making trade-offs in other important areas like tire-braking traction and all-weather handling," said Lantz. "As far as the ride goes, these tires are as smooth as any tire on the road today."

The tires represent one of many fuel-saving technologies that help the Cruze Eco average 42 miles per gallon on the highway.

With a starting suggested price of \$19,175, Cruze Eco offers hybrid-like fuel economy without the premium price tag.

Other innovations that make the Cruze an MPG standout include an air shutter system that morphs the aerodynamic profile of the vehicle to optimize fuel efficiency and energy-efficient rack-mounted electric power steering.

Lantz, an incurable tinkerer, grew up tearing apart and rebuilding childhood toys to figure out what made them tick.

"A curiosity about how things work is second nature

to me," he said. "In my work, I'm always looking at how we can make things better for our customers."

Before joining General Motors, Lantz spent more than 20 years at a major tire manufacturer.

"Back then, I worked with many automakers," said Lantz. "That experience taught me that GM knows more about tires than any other automaker by far."

The special tires on the Eco recently helped auto writer Richard Truesdell to travel from Riverside, Calif., to New Jersey - a distance of some 3,000 miles - on just 72 gallons of gas.

He drove a Cruze Eco with a 1.4L engine that was slightly modified by GM engineers for efficiency and aerodynamics.

Still, he made the cross-country trip in the car in a couple of days and his mileage was more than acceptable.

The Cruze is GM's newest small car built at its Lordstown, Ohio, assembly center, which earlier had made the Chevy Cavalier.

## LTU Graduates First Class of Auto Design Students

SOUTHFIELD - The first four students to complete a bachelor's degree in transportation design at Lawrence Technological University will graduate when commencement ceremonies are held at Cobo Arena in Detroit on May 15.

Even though this is the first graduating class, Lawrence Tech's program has already been recognized by www.designschools.com as one of the country's top eight in automotive design. The four members of the first graduating class were all working in the industry during their final semester:

- Jason Falenski (Troy), Ford Motor Company.
- Ben Graf (Sebewaing, Mich.), RTT USA, an international graphics software company.
- Taylor Manuilow (Port Huron), Peugeot in France.
- Chris Nichols (Sears, Mich.), Volkswagen in Germany.

The degree program reflects Lawrence Tech's signature "Theory and Practice" approach to learning by combining in-depth conceptual investigations with hands-on projects and extensive exposure to working professionals. It draws on two disciplines, engineering and design, and the new graduates have been prepared as designers who understand automotive technology and how to communicate effectively with engineers.

Transportation design students at Lawrence Tech work on industry-sponsored projects in all four years of college, and many are hired as interns or co-op students prior to graduation.

"We've tried to make our program like a four-year ap-

prenticeship," said Keith Nagara, director of the transportation design program at Lawrence Tech.

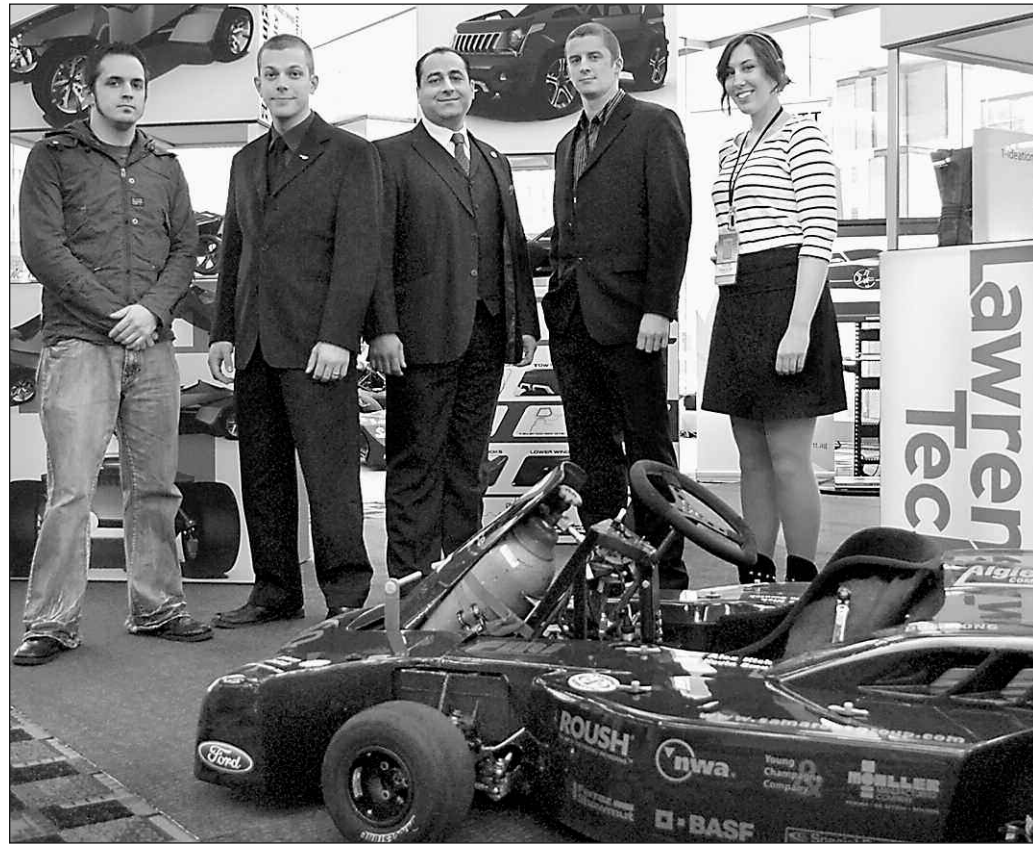
In many ways the program reflects the Nagara's own experience. Originally an art student, he earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and a master's degree in automotive engineering from Lawrence Tech. He worked on powertrain systems at Chrysler Corp. and automotive design at Ford.

He was recruited for the Lawrence Tech study committee that created the trans-

portation design program, was hired as co-director for the launch in 2007, and took over as director the following year.

"We wanted to create an industry studio environment," Nagara said. "Students must blend their creative talent with an understanding of engineering and manufacturing technology, so that they design projects with feasibility of manufacturing in mind."

Lawrence Technological University offers more than 100 undergraduate, master's and doctoral degree programs



Keith Nagara, center, is director of the transportation design program at Lawrence Tech, and he is joined by the four students who were the first to graduate from the program on May 15 at Cobo Arena in Detroit. They are (L-R) Ben Graf, Jason Falenski, Chris Nichols, and Taylor Manuilow.



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood was at the Detroit Amtrak Station in New Center to announce an almost \$200 million grant for high speed rail between Detroit and Chicago.

## Dearborn Dealership Welcomes Focus

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that the Focus projects.

"With a stronger body structure, the Focus exhibits safety starting at the ground and works its way up. Ford has used high-strength steel in several of their vehicle lines and it shows with their exceptionally high crash safety ratings."

Turla added that she be-

lieved that Dearborn-based auto supplier Severstal provided the high-strength steel she referenced earlier.

Otherwise, Turla and staff hosted a "Detroit-themed" food party for visitors that included Faygo soda pop, Better Made potato chips and Dearborn brand hot dogs.

Turla mentioned that sales staff member Ray Bouchard, known internally as "The Sul-

tan of Sync," will be giving Ford car technology training to customers who want to better learn how to use Sync and MyFordTouch to their maximum potential.

So the 2012 Focus is finally on the market. Everybody in Dearborn is waiting to see how it performs and it's fair to say that expectations for it becoming a sales leader and performer are fairly high.



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

The Fairlane Ford dealership in Dearborn kept a Focus under wraps for a grand unveiling last Thursday. All Metro Detroit Ford Dealers participated in the Focus "Premiere" kickoff event.

## OnStar Connects Tornado Victims

DETROIT - When OnStar Advisors Karen Nolan and LaTonya Jones arrived at work on April 28 during the April Tornado Outbreak, neither expected a typical day. Before their shifts ended, they would help reunite two

families affected by the worst week for U.S. tornados in nearly 40 years.

During the severe weather that battered several Southern and Midwestern States, many people were left without electricity, telephones or cellular service. For those with OnStar service, locating loved ones, obtaining shelter information and getting updates on local conditions was possible because OnStar activated Crisis Assist, making extra services available to OnStar subscribers regardless of their plan.

OnStar is designed to maximize cellular coverage with an externally mounted antenna that can often provide a connection when personal cellular phones cannot.

For Jim and Carol Barrile of Toney, Ala., who live less than five miles from Harvest, Ala., where an EF5 tornado touched down and destroyed much of the town, the storm did some major damage to Toney and left it without power for days.

Carol Barrile wanted to let her children who live out of state know she and Jim were safe. Without a working telephone or mobile phone service, Carol pressed the red OnStar Emergency button on the rearview mirror of her 2011 Chevrolet Impala.

Upon hearing, "OnStar Center, this is Karen, how may I help you?" Carol told Karen her situation and within seconds Karen set up a conference call with Carol's daughter, Suzanne.

"Her daughter was obviously upset when I first contacted her," Karen said. "She seemed a little fearful about her parents' whereabouts since she hadn't heard from them. But the moment she heard her mom's voice she was relieved."

"I help people every day at work. It's part of my job, but this situation shows we [OnStar] can be there when you need us most."

In Albertville, Ala., another mother was desperate to get in touch with her child.

"When I answered the call, the subscriber was crying. She couldn't find her teenage son and was very worried," said OnStar Advisor LaTonya Jones.

"She kept saying she couldn't find 'her baby.' He had gone to work and couldn't be reached after the storm hit. I had to do everything I could to help her find him."

As the subscriber's only connection, LaTonya made courtesy calls to his job, local police and fire departments as well as friends in hopes of locating the teen.

"Even the local public safety answering points were unreachable. Just when I was going to dial the police station in the next town over, her son walked through the door. She was overjoyed and thankful."

Since 1996, OnStar has been an in-vehicle lifeline for those in need. From helping to unlock the doors of a vehicle with a young child trapped inside to providing emergency responders the exact location of a collision, OnStar Advisors answer an average of 10,000 Emergency Service calls each month.

OnStar combines the power of human connections with unparalleled expertise. Building on more than 15 years of service and nearly 360 million customer interactions, OnStar Advisors are specially trained to handle emergency situations and are available 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

OnStar, a wholly owned subsidiary of General Motors, is the leading provider of connected safety and security solutions, value-added mobility services and advanced information technology. Currently available on more than 40 MY 2011 GM models, OnStar soon will be available for installation on most other vehicles already on the road through local electronics retailers, including Best Buy.

OnStar safely connects its more than six million subscribers, in the U.S., Canada and China, in ways never thought possible.