



CATA Bulletin

DRIVECHICAGO.COM
official Web site of CATA dealers

a biweekly newsletter

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Redesigned DriveChicago.com site launches

A revitalized DriveChicago Web portal, now featuring more than 100,000 vehicles from the inventories of CATA dealers, debuted April 28. The total listings makes DriveChicago.com the most extensive new- and used-vehicle offering on the Internet for area consumers.

To trumpet the portal upgrade, an extensive radio advertising campaign began airing April 18, with 60-second spots playing on 12 Chicago stations, and 10- and 15-second spots on nearly every station in the market.

And an energized DriveChicago InPrint, a weekly advertising publication featuring the vehicles of CATA dealers, now numbers 100 pages and is available at about 1,500 locations.

The redesigned portal, with the theme, "virtually every vehicle in town," is easier for consumers to navigate, and the numbers of unique users

and resultant leads both were up in the first days following the portal's re-launch.

"Everything you do on the site now is about getting to a lead submission form," said DriveChicago General Manager Don Longacre.

The new DriveChicago.com also is easier for dealers to manage. Once a dealer's inventory is established, images can be uploaded and prices changed quickly, and the changes appear instantly. The portal employs WebMakerX to make such changes. If a dealership uses the WebMakerX platform for its own site, any changes would appear instantly in both places.

"The DriveChicago portal has been optimized for response time, and that's something we have been focusing on for the better part of three or four

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AFIP certification: A dealer's first line of defense

Dealers nationwide increasingly pursue AFIP certification for their F&I employees. The Association of Finance and Insurance Professionals, based in Fort Worth, Texas, this year has certified about 1,500 F&I workers, a number equal to all of 2004.

A dealer who pays for study materials and the certification exam for F&I personnel demonstrates a concerted effort to ensure that his customers are handled ethically and within the bounds

of the law. If a case for legal action unfolds, a plausible argument can be made that it was the act of a rogue employee—not a result of a deficiency in dealership policy, training or management.

Certification exams are administered each month by CATA Learning University, at the association's Oakbrook Terrace office. Applicants must correctly answer 120 questions on the 150-point

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Nominations for Time Magazine award for dealers due June 14

Nominations for the annual Time Magazine Quality Dealer Award, which honors new-car dealers for their business acumen and community service, must be received by the CATA by Tuesday, June 14.

All nominations should be submitted using the nomination ballot included with this newsletter. Criteria for eligible nominees appear on the ballot.

The Civic and Dealer Relations Committee of the CATA board of directors will review all nominations and submit the name of one CATA candidate for consideration for the national award.

Winners are named next February at the NADA convention in Orlando, Fla. National winners are selected by a panel of faculty members from the University of Michigan Graduate School of Business Administration.

Recent TMQDA nominees

2005 Mary Ford Dolan
2004 Dan Feeny
2003 Bill Jacobs
2002 Bill Stasek
2001 Bill Hawkinson
2000 John Guido
1999 Lee Weinman
1998 Ray Scarpelli
1997 Jack Haggerty

AYES high school honors CATA

Technology Center of DuPage, one of six area high school partners in the state's Automotive Youth Educational Systems program, on May 4 honored the CATA as 2005 Business Partner of the Year. The CATA is a leading proponent of AYES.

AYES is a national program sponsored by 13 vehicle manufacturers and state and metropolitan dealer associations. The magnet high school in Addison offers to seniors and juniors about 20 career acceleration programs, including automotive technology.

Jim Butcher, the Illinois AYES manager, works at the CATA in Oakbrook Terrace. He said the high school awarded the CATA for presenting networking opportunities for students to see the range of career paths possible in the automotive technology field.

"The school recognized the CATA for being a great partner with education," Butcher said.

In honoring the CATA, Technology Center of DuPage officials said: "With Mr. Butcher's leadership, more than 50 TCD students have been placed in dealerships in the last five years. Jim also attends all the TCD Open Houses, Career Fairs, Job Fairs and Mentor Training sessions representing AYES.

"Jim sets up partnerships with dealerships all over the state and is a regular volunteer for extra curricular activities at TCD. Mr. Butcher also is responsible for the AYES booth at the auto show every year.

"In short, we cannot give enough praise for Jim, the CATA or AYES."

The AYES program can provide a vital pipeline of future technicians, and area dealers who participate in AYES rate the program highly. But more dealership involvement is critical. Butcher is busy trying to match qualified students with dealerships for year-long internships. Journeymen technicians act as mentors for the students.

To learn more about AYES, call Butcher at 630-424-6020.

Auto show a top attraction: Crain's

The Chicago Auto Show is among the city's top tourist sightseeing attractions, according 2004 attendance rankings tracked by Crain's Chicago Business.

The Crain's May 2 edition ranked the auto show as the sixth most attended attraction, estimating that 1.2 million people visited the '04 show. Auto show officials do not release attendance figures. The fourth most popular attraction, Millennium Park, drew 1.5 million guests.

Navy Pier led all Chicago sightseeing attractions, with 8.7 million visitors in 2004.

DriveChicago

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months," said Longacre. "Right now, we have 80 percent of the dealer data on the portal."

For \$295, a dealer can feature 10 cars in the weekly DriveChicago InPrint and get liner ads for each of those 10 cars in the Chicago Sun-Times for four days.

"Some dealers use a one-two punch of the 10-car deal plus a display page in DriveChicago InPrint," Longacre said. "The display ad is another \$200, and the results for dealers have been great."

DriveChicago InPrint is available at the combined 700 outlets of area Jewel and Dominick's grocery stores; 7-Eleven convenience stores; Blockbuster movie rental outlets; and Bally Total Fitness locations. The publication also is positioned at another 800 banks, restaurants, colleges, gas stations, offices and other high-traffic areas.

DriveChicago.com is co-owned by the CATA and by Hollinger International, the parent company of the Sun-Times, the Daily Southtown, the Post-Tribune in northwest Indiana, and the Pioneer Press chain of 53 suburban weekly newspapers. It is a strategic alliance that gives CATA dealers preferential placement in all the publications.

The radio spots use a "man on the street" approach with real consumers. The slightly comical and upbeat tone allows helps distinguish the spots in a crowded commercial landscape. The campaign continues through the year.

DriveChicago also offers free, ongoing instruction for Internet managers, to help them stay on top of ever-changing technologies. Notice of any instruction is posted on the portal.

A new company business model gives all DriveChicago benefits to every CATA dealer, including a presence on the portal. Some dealers are not participating yet. Call 630-424-6080 to establish a connection.

"To my knowledge," Longacre said, "no other Web portal matches the penetration of DriveChicago.com."

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18W200 Butterfield Road

Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181-4810

630-495-CATA [2282] phone 630-495-2260 fax

The CATA Bulletin is published and mailed every other Friday except during the Chicago Auto Show, when it is not published.

Listings of items for sale are subject to the approval of the CATA. Candidates for employment must submit a full résumé to the Editor.

Review past editions or search by topic at www.cata.info/

Jerry H. Cizek III President, Publisher
Erik K. Higgins Editor, Director of Dealer Affairs

Looking back, moving forward

By Ray Scarpelli Sr.

METRO CHICAGO NADA DIRECTOR

This month gives us an opportunity to look back and remember those who have fought to preserve our freedom and to look forward as we bring positive change to the industry and help all dealers ensure a promising future.

The NADA strives to improve the legislative and regulatory climate for dealers:

- NADA President Phil Brady and legislative executive director Ivette Rivera were with President Bush April 21 when he signed **bankruptcy reform legislation** into law. The new law includes NADA provisions that will help dealers protect their secured credit for a motor vehicle when a customer files for bankruptcy.

- Following House passage April 13 of a bill that would **permanently repeal the federal estate tax** (H.R. 8), the NADA turned its attention to the Senate. The association will host a “fly-in” of influential dealers and state dealer association executives to Washington for face-to-face meetings with senators whose votes are critical to estate tax reform. This bill is critical to dealers; I urge you to contact Senators Durbin and Obama to gain their support.

- Dealers are also asked to contact their representatives and ask them to cosponsor H.R. 1049, which would exclude tractors weighing 26,000 pounds or less from the **federal excise tax**. See www.atd.org for info on the FET and for changes to the federal highway use tax that go into effect July 1.

The NADA also is working hard to improve communications and relations between dealers and manufacturers:

- A round of **face-to-face meetings with virtually all**

manufacturers is underway to present dealers’ views—as revealed in the results of the latest Dealer Attitude Survey—directly to top auto factory executives.

There are many NADA programs in which you can participate, including one that honors our veterans:

- This month, take part in the **National Moment of Remembrance** by pausing for one minute at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day to remember the courage and sacrifice of those who fought and died for our freedoms. The White House has asked that dealers help spread the word in our communities; the May issue of AutoExec magazine will contain a poster you can display in your dealership. More information and ideas for ways to make this minute meaningful to you and your community are at www.remember.gov, and ideas specific to dealerships will be coming from the NADA.

- I hope you were able to participate in **National Tire Safety Week**, April 24-30. The “Be Tire Smart—Do Your PART” campaign to raise awareness of tire wear, pressure, and maintenance to ensure passenger safety. But the campaign runs year-round, and the NADA and the Rubber Manufacturers Association will provide dealers with a free tire safety kit at any time. The kit includes 200 consumer brochures, a brochure holder and a poster. Look for a link on www.nada.org or www.rma.org to order.

- Mark your calendar now for September, **Child Safety Seat Month**; and for Oct. 24-29, **Automotive Career Week**. The NADA will make materials for both available to dealers over the coming weeks.

With the NADA’s help, dealers across America should prosper this year. And with dealers’ help, the association should be able to tackle the serious issues facing our industry, so that we will all be able to look back on 2005 with positive memories. Thank you for being an active member, and contact me any time to discuss your views.

AIADA Automotive Congress May 17-18

Lower healthcare costs, elimination of the 25 percent tariff on pickup trucks, and the perennial call to repeal the federal estate tax are top subjects of the 28th annual Automotive Congress, presented by the AIADA, May 17-18 in Washington, D.C.

Dealers can register to attend the congress at www.aiada.org/2005Congress or at (703) 519-7800.

Scheduled speakers include Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), and Reps. Tom DeLay (R-Texas), Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), Clay Shaw (R-Fla.), and Mike Rogers (R-Mich.)

IADA Legislative Conference May 10

The annual Legislative Conference and Luncheon of the Illinois Automobile Dealers Association is Tuesday in Springfield. Dealers can meet with legislators to talk about matters that impact them. To register, call 800-252-8944.

AFIP

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test. However, the exam is rigorous; 10 percent to 15 percent of certification hopefuls fail the exam each year, said AFIP officials.

Since CATA Learning University began offering the exam in March, 57 of the 60 test-takers have passed. Call 847-953-6055 about AFIP testing on June 23 and 24.

The CATA negotiated with the AFIP a tuition of \$500 for all self-study materials and certification testing. For all personnel who earn certification, the CATA will rebate \$250 to the dealership, to encourage full participation by every dealer. The final cost represents a \$420 savings compared to AFIP prices charged by other dealer associations.

The AFIP certification program analyzes the state and federal laws that govern the F&I function. A mastery of the rules manifests itself in three ways.

First, an AFIP-certified F&I person

would not, out of ignorance, make an egregious error that would lead to lawsuits or news exposés involving the dealership.

Second, customers instinctively trust and respond positively to someone who demonstrates a command of her profession. And there is no area in which knowledge is more important than the laws that control the solicitation, processing and disclosure of vehicle funding and indemnification contracts.

Third, someone with a precise understanding of the rules knows boundaries. The certified F&I professional knows what's illegal, but also is aware of opportunities that may exist to legally and ethically "wire" a marginal deal. Certification helps sell cars.

In addition to passing the college-level final exam, certified personnel must agree in writing to abide by the AFIP Code of Ethics, which states that the F&I practitioner is personally responsible for what transpires between the customer and the person behind the F&I desk.

Cambridge deflects unemployment claims

One hundred twenty-three CATA dealer members reported a combined 437 unemployment claims during the first quarter of 2005 to Cambridge Integrated Services Group, Inc., which formerly operated as the Martin Boyer Co. The company's efforts saved those dealers a total of \$757,458 in benefits by contesting the claims.

Cambridge monitors any unemployment claims against its clients. The company counts about 230 CATA dealers among its clients.

Claims that can be protested and subsequently denied help minimize an employer's unemployment tax rate. The rate can vary between 1.2 percent and 9.8 percent of each employee's first \$10,500 in earnings. The 2005 average unemployment tax rate among Illinois employers is 4.7 percent, or about \$493.50 annually. That is nearly double the 2003 rate.

"The unemployment tax is really the only controllable tax, in that it's experience-driven," said Paul Schardt, senior vice president of Cambridge. An ex-employee's claim affects the employer's tax rate for three years.

Client fees amount to \$2.20 per employee, per fiscal quarter. For the fee, Cambridge monitors all unemployment claims, files any appeals, represents the client at any hearings, verifies the benefit charge statements and confirms the client's unemployment tax rate.

The former Martin Boyer Co. has represented CATA members since 1979. To discuss retaining the company, call Schardt at 312-381-8241.

www.cata.info

In Memoriam

Louis T. Bravos, an Oldsmobile dealer who in 1987 ascended to vice president of the CATA board of directors, died April 23. He was 79.

Bravos operated Lou Bravos Oldsmobile in Barrington and served on the CATA board from 1984 to 1989. He fought as a Marine during World War II. Mr. Bravos is survived by one daughter, Deborah, and two grandsons.

Memorials can be made to the American Lung Association.

Marketplace

Controller/Office Manager 20+ years dealership experience. Cross training in multi-departments, Microsoft Word and Excel, ADP. Organized team player, dedicated, professional, self-motivated. Debra Simo, 708-804-6814.

Office Manager/Comptroller 17 years in auto industry. 3-time recipient of perfect financial statement in Honda's "Key to Excellence" program. Team player with department managers, emphasis on total dealership expense controls. Tina McGrath, 847-428-6616.

Résumés of both candidates on file at the CATA.