CATA Bulletin

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CATA office at auto show Jan. 30-Feb. 15
No meetings in February

The offices of the Chicago Automobile Trade
Association will close in Oakbrook Terrace Jan. 29 and
not reopen till Feb. 16.

Far from taking a two-week cruise, the CATA staff
will be relocated to McCormick Place to produce the
2004 Chicago Auto Show.

Because the CATA office will be closed, dealership
personnel must make the following adjustments:
• Personnel responsible for securing any forms
provided free by the CATA—odometer statements,
used-car buyer’s guides, used-car limited warranty
statements and emission control equipment state-
ments—should place orders by Jan. 27 to ensure the
orders can be processed by Jan. 29. Don’t be caught
with an empty supply shelf.
• Responses to faxed requests for license plate
information will not be possible. For information in the
interim, contact the Illinois Secretary of State’s dealer
inquiry service at 217-782-6877.
• Meeting rooms at the CATA will be inaccessible
Jan. 30-Feb. 15.

Any calls to the CATA will be forwarded automati-
cally to McCormick Place until the office reopens.

Auto show gala expected to raise $2 million for 16 area charities

Sixteen Chicago area charities will benefit from
more than $2 million expected to be raised by a
black-tie gala held on the eve of the 2004 Chicago Auto
Show in February. See the pamphlet accompanying this
newsletter for details and a form to order tickets.

The coming “First Look”
event, on Feb. 5, gives bene-
factors the chance to see
nearly 1,000 new vehicles on
display amid an elegance not
present when more than 1
million people converge on
McCormick Place during the
auto show’s 10-day con-
sumer run, Feb. 6-15.

Benefactors also have the
chance to win one of two
2004 premium vehicles: an
Acura TL or a Lexus SC 430.

About 10,000 attendees at
the charity gala will be
 treated to hors d’oeuvres;
champagne, wine, beer and
soft drinks; and special en-
tertainment presented by the
automakers in their displays.

The public phase of the auto
show attracts huge crowds
each day.

The 16 organizations par-
ticipating in this year’s First
Look for Charity predomin-
antly are children-oriented.
Some operate on a global
level; others, locally. The
charities receive 100 percent
of the proceeds from the

E-mail restrictions take effect

File this under “govern-
ment in action”: Legislation
to prohibit unsolicited com-
mercial e-mail took effect
Jan. 1, but the Federal Trade
Commission has not yet is-
 sued rules that fully define
the compliance require-
ments. Nevertheless, compli-
age is mandatory.

The “can spam” legisla-
tion—an acronym for the
“Controlling the Assault of
Non-Solicited Pornography
and Marketing Act of
2003”—imposes certain re-
strictions on the use of com-
See E-mail, Page 4

See Charity, Page 4
What women want

Female car buyers look for features that fit their lives

Draped in plush leather, deluxe acoustic systems and elegant wood trim, the $150,000 Bentley Continental GT is the kind of vehicle designed to satisfy a driver’s every desire. Except for one detail.

“There’s still no place for your purse,” said Denesha Evans, an account executive in Michigan, as she sat in the driver’s seat looking for a place to stash her handbag.

Based on a survey released this month by the Women’s Economic Club and past market research, female consumers generally want more storage, better safety features and more room in their vehicles—extras that don’t rank high in importance among men.

But despite research that shows women purchase 50 percent of new cars and influence 80 percent of car-buying decisions, their preferences in vehicle design often have been overlooked by the auto industry.

Looking at the amped-up stereos, menacing front grilles and other macho attributes of autos past and present, it’s apparent why Detroit became home of the adage that “you can sell a guy’s car to women, but you can’t sell a woman’s car to a guy.”

In recent years, responding to growing power among female consumers and industry executives, automakers have toned down the testosterone to a certain extent, tacking on safety features by the score and revamping interiors to handle loose change and a super-sized soda from the drive-through. The Volkswagen Beetle even features a built-in bud vase, complete with a fake daisy, to soften the interior atmosphere.

But there still is room for improvement, according to the Women’s Economic Club survey.

Women asked for better windshield wipers, adjustable pedals that can be operated in high heels and computer chargers or ports. According to past research, males tend to prefer appearance and performance attributes above practical ones.

Even the seemingly innocuous bench seat is a heated battleground between the genders, said Art Spinella, an auto industry analyst at CNW Marketing in Bandon, Ore.

On a scale of 1 to 10, Spinella said, surveys have shown women on average rate the bench seat an 8, because it enables them to place items conveniently within reach of the driver. Men, meanwhile, tend to think the bench seat is lame, rating it a 2.2. Males prefer the appearance of bucket seats, giving them a 6.3, while women rate separated seats at a 3.4.

“Women tend to be more practical as consumers, rating things such as safety as very important. Men tend to be more concerned with appearance and rating the stereo system as very important,” Spinella said. “It’s something that is even apparent in children (who are surveyed).”

Not everyone agrees the differences between “men’s” cars and “women’s” cars are all that striking.

John and Susan Kibele said they had very similar reactions when car shopping, chalkling up any differences to personal preference, not gender.

“I don’t think it has a whole lot to do with gender,” Susan Kibele said. “My daughter drives a truck. I don’t think women want much different than men generally.”

Whether or not the difference in preferences between genders is as big as the industry thinks, they’ll likely keep cranking out cars aimed mostly at men, Spinella said.

“Up to this point, they’ll just use what they think men want and figure women will just buy it anyway,” he said. “That’s why you see so many bucket seats as standard equipment.”

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E-mail spam regulations

On Dec. 16, President Bush signed the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act (CAN-SPAM Act) of 2003. The law, which took effect Jan. 1, imposes new restrictions on dealers who use e-mail to market their products and services.

Among the new responsibilities imposed by the law is that dealers must prominently offer their customers the opportunity to opt out of future commercial e-mail solicitations. Dealers also must ensure that each commercial e-mail solicitation:

- Identifies the message as an advertisement or solicitation;
- Includes a functioning return e-mail address that the recipient can use to submit an opt-out request; and
- Provides a valid physical postal address for the dealer’s business.

Opt-out requests must be processed within 10 business days of receipt and ensure future e-mail solicitations are not sent to the requesters. These requirements do not apply to transactional or relationship e-mail messages, which are defined in a summary prepared by the NADA’s Regulatory Affairs staff.

As you can see, this legislation provided very little lead-time to comply with the new requirements, which dealers must do immediately. The summary is available on the Member Services>Government Affairs>Regulation page of www.nada.org or through the NADA’s fax-on-demand service. Call 800-778-7209 and request Document No. 85.

Happy New Year?

The NADA will keep dealers updated on any regulatory developments in what continues to be a steady stream of congressional mandates and regulations.

Las Vegas, here we come!

As we begin a new year, the NADA is in the final stages of preparation for our Industry Event of the Year, the NADA Convention and Exposition, which begins Jan. 31. Anyone who is not pre-registered must register on-site.

The Convention Committee, led by NADA director Carl Barnett, has a fantastic program with wonderful speakers, informative exhibits, and the chance to meet face-to-face with your fellow dealers and senior manufacturer representatives.

Don’t miss a thing! For information on the programs, speakers, workshops, exhibits, lifestyle programs, hotels and tours, and to schedule your time at the show, visit www.nada.org and click on the home page Convention icon.

This year, for the first time, the American Financial Services Association has invited us to come early and enjoy the association’s Auto Finance Conference and Exposition, Jan. 28-30 at the Ritz Carlton Lake Las Vegas.

With all the media attention given to auto dealers and financing, this is a most timely invitation. Speakers leading a panel discussion include Mike Jackson of AutoNation; Allan Gilmour, vice chairman of Ford Motor Co.; and Lin Peacock, executive director of the NADA Industry Affairs Division.

Happy 25th, Dealer Academy!

The NADA Dealer Academy marks 25 years this month. The first Dealer Candidate Academy class in 1979 had 16 students, and the DCA remains the most popular course today. More than 400 students are expected to participate in the program this year alone.

Classes have opened for dealership managers and expanded to include auction courses and weekend refresher courses for past students.

All GM minority dealer candidates can enroll in the DCA program to boost their success, and many other manufacturers encourage future dealers to take the NADA’s premier training.

In other news:

- I hope you’re all using NADAExpress Internet home page to make your day easier. It’s a personal planner that presents information customized to your specifications. Select from NADA information, online publications, financial info sources, leisure pursuit sites, and other options to have what you need—right at your fingertips and free, a benefit of NADA membership.

- The NADA continues to defend dealers and the franchise system in the media against unwarranted criticism by the Wall Street Journal, “Dateline NBC” and Public Citizen. NADA Chairman Alan Starling’s remarks and letters have appeared in several media outlets. Exposing the critics’ affiliations has called into question their comments. Please review the NADA’s Code of Ethics to be sure your dealership rises above the naysayers’ cries of fraud and deception.

As always, as your NADA board member, I stand ready to bring your views to the national office, and national office to you, so keep in touch. I hope to see you in Las Vegas!
Charity
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

event, and all those proceeds are used in their efforts in the Chicago area, McGrath said.

Charities involved in the 13th annual First Look for Charity are: Advocate Hope Children’s Hospital, ALSAC/St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, Alzheimer’s Association, Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago, Campagna Academy, Children’s Memorial Hospital, Clearbrook, The Cradle, and the Cure Autism Now Foundation.

Also, the Ray Graham Association for People with Disabilities, Illinois Spina Bifida Association, Little City Foundation, March of Dimes Birth Defects Association, Ronald McDonald House Charities, Misericordia Heart of Mercy, and the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Tickets to the event are $175 each and can be ordered by calling 630-424-1636. Benefactors should indicate which charity or charities they want their donation to benefit. Of each ticket, $146 is tax-deductible as a charitable expense.

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White serves as honorary chairman of the event. “It’s a wonderful event that raises a lot of money for worthwhile causes and gives people an premiere look at the best auto show in the nation,” White said.

Auto show chairman McGrath said the Chicago Automobile Trade Association, which produces First Look for Charity and the Chicago Auto Show, selected the 16 organizations in recognition of their beneficial community efforts.

Fuel economy guide no longer mailed

Unless specially requested, the fuel economy guides produced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Energy Department no longer will be mailed to dealers.

However, dealers still must display the guide and provide copies to customers on request.

The guide can be downloaded from the Energy Department’s Web site, www.fueleconomy.gov/

The NADA notified all dealers of the change on Jan. 8, and the DOE will send a similar letter later this month.

E-mail
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

commercial e-mail messages, but excludes restrictions on transactional or relationship e-mails.

A commercial e-mail message is defined as “any electronic mail message, the primary purpose of which is the commercial advertisement or promotion of a commercial product or service (including content on an Internet Web site operated for a commercial purpose).”

When transmitting commercial e-mail, dealers must prominently offer their customers the opportunity to opt out of any future commercial e-mail solicitations. Dealers also must ensure that each commercial e-mail solicitation (1) identifies the message as an advertisement or solicitation, (2) includes a functioning return e-mail address which the recipient can use to submit an opt-out request, and (3) provides a valid physical postal address for the dealer’s business.

Dealers must process opt-out requests within 10 business days of receipt and ensure future e-mail solicitations are not sent to the requesters.

A business is not violating the new law if the functioning return e-mail address is unexpectedly and temporarily unable to receive messages for a reasonable time.

Mere inclusion in an e-mail message of a reference, or link, to a Web site of commercial entity does not, by itself, categorize the message as commercial e-mail if the contents or circumstances of the e-mail indicate a “primary purpose” other than the advertisement or promotion of a commercial product or service.

The FTC will issue regulations by the end of 2004 that define the “primary purpose” of an e-mail.

By June, the FTC will establish a “do-not-e-mail” registry.

Major tax deadlines loom

As a housekeeping matter, the following tax matters must be treated by Feb. 2:

• Employers must provide 2003 W-2 statements to employees.
• Payors must provide 2003 Form 1099s to payees.
• Deadline for employers to file Form 941 for the fourth quarter of 2003 and pay any tax due.
• Employers generally must file 2003 federal unemployment tax returns and pay any tax due.

These deadlines normally fall on Jan. 31. Because that date this year is a Saturday, the deadlines are moved to the next business day.

Businesses are required to make federal tax deposits on dates determined by various factors that differ from business to business.

Marketplace

Controller Aggressive self-starter analyzes and interprets financial data and recommends changes to improve systems, financial performance and internal controls. Mark E. Thomas, 708-932-5596.

Résumé on file at the CATA.