



Upcoming DealersEdge webinars

The Chicago Automobile Trade Association has established a partnership with DealersEdge to provide high-quality training and informational webinars that offer the content to CATA member dealers at a significantly discounted rate.

The rate for CATA members for the weekly presentations is \$149, half what is charged to users who do not subscribe to DealersEdge. Webinars premiere on a near-weekly basis.

Even for dealers who hold an annual membership with DealersEdge, the new relationship with the CATA represents a savings because DealersEdge offers its Webinars to its own members for \$198. Regular annual membership fees are \$397, and normal webinar fees are \$298 for non-DealersEdge members.

Once purchased, DealersEdge webinars and accompanying PDF files can be downloaded and viewed later—and repeatedly. No matter how many people watch at your location, each connection costs a CATA member just \$149. A telephone connection is not needed; and the fee includes both PowerPoint slides and audio.

To register for any of the DealersEdge webinars, go to www.cata.info. On the tan bar across the top of the screen, click on Education/Careers and follow the dropdown menu to CATA-DealersEdge webinars.

Coming topics:

Thursday, Jan. 5 at 12 p.m. CST

“Fixed Operations Growth Opportunities & Obstacles in 2012” With each year comes new opportunities. This webinar features Fixed Ops guru Lloyd Schiller with his view of what dealers, GMs and service directors need to be looking at and planning for to make the most

SEE **WEBINARS**, PAGE 2

Chicagoland Dealers Care can augment dealers’ charity giving

Illinois charities, already struggling in a weak economy, face added fiscal pressures caused by delinquent state funding. Dealer members of the CATA can turn to the association for supplemental charitable giving via

Chicagoland Dealers Care.

And during this season of giving, give the CATA a reason to give!

The 3-year-old program provides up to \$1,500 in grants to augment a dealer’s

SEE **CHARITY**, PAGE 2

2012 Illinois DOC fee maximum is \$161.39

The maximum amount that Illinois dealers can charge in 2012 for documentary preparation fees is \$161.39, the Illinois attorney general’s office announced Dec. 16.

The \$5.31 increase over the 2011 maximum fee reflects a 3.4 percent rise in the federal Consumer Price Index for the 12-month period ending Nov. 30. The index is tracked by the U.S. Department of Labor. As always, the DOC fee is taxable and must be substantiated upon request by the attorney general’s office.

The CATA is developing a poster about the DOC fee that dealer members can display. On the poster, the DOC fee amount is left blank for dealers to fill in; any amount up to the maximum allowed may be charged, but all customers should be charged the same amount. Systematically charging one group but not another—all males but no females, for instance—could bring charges of profiling. Two copies of the poster will be mailed to dealers this month.

IMPORTANT: The new maximum fee cannot be charged before Jan. 1.

Marketplace

Service Manager Results driven manager with over 20 years of experience in the automotive field and fixed operations. A decision maker and leader in customer loyalty and satisfaction with growth, increased sales and profitability outcomes. Andrew Ackermann, (630) 333-2596.

Controller 30-time recipient of Ford-Lincoln-Mercury District Business Manager Award. A Pilot dealer for the FDSC system 6000, recently handled installation of FDSC system 7000. Manage staff of 12, expert in cost reduction. Donald Raimondi, (847) 658-0879.

Sales/Marketing Extensive dealership sales and F&I experience. Also proficient with CRM's and DMS's IE: ADP and Reynolds & Reynolds. Expert in all FTC safeguards rules and regulations. Can manage 50 accounts at once. Paul Cuchna, (847) 858-3590.

For sale Former Naperville new-vehicle dealership near Ogden/Aurora Aves. High traffic area. Lifts, other shop equip. optional. Retail zoning. Call Ron Czalowski of Coldwell Banker Commercial, (630) 740-6365.

Webinars

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of 2012.

While the economy continues to stumble along, Lloyd will review profit problems in service and parts that mostly are self-inflicted. The collapse of 2008-09 left many dealers overly cautious, and that caution is costing them profits. Lloyd will look at an array of decisions you need to be making now to both maximize fixed operations profits and minimize losses resulting from bad decisions or a faulty view of the market. Lloyd is a "bull" and not a "bear" on what you can do to raise the bar in Fixed Ops in 2012.

Thursday, Jan. 12 at 12 p.m. CST

"What's Ahead in 2012 for Variable Departments & Other Concerns" A discussion of how dealers and top managers can capitalize on the opportunities coming in 2012 while avoiding pitfalls.

The car business has been good lately for most. Will the improved business and car sales trends of 2011 continue in 2012? What economic issues must car dealers watch closely to both maximize their gains in 2012, while avoiding mistakes that could bring about the opposite results? What strategies can we expect from the manufacturers once the 2011 supply constraints become a thing of the past? Each year is filled with its own opportunities and obstacles. While predicting the future with total accuracy is impossible, there are clues to what will transpire. The key is to be nimble and alert.

Charity

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

contributions to local charities. Grant requests can be for a variety of causes: academic programs, cultural arts, performing arts, medical research, and more.

The Jeffrey Pride Foundation for Pediatric Cancer Research and Operation Support Our Troops-Illinois, Inc. are two recent beneficiaries. The former was nominated for funding by Emir Abinon, president of Fox Valley Volkswagen in West Chicago. The latter was nominated by George Honiotes, who operates Experience Kia of North Aurora.

"One in 300 kids is diagnosed with pediatric cancer before they turn 17," Abinon said. "Chicagoland Dealers Care is a great idea to utilize some of our (association) funds. A lot of dealers are embedded in their communities and support worthy causes." Dealers are not solicited to sustain the operating budget for Chicagoland Dealers Care. Instead, the program is funded by the CATA.

As a part of the program, the CATA also continues in its partnership with NBC 5 Chicago to spotlight the positive things that new-car dealers do regularly in their communities. Some initiatives have been developed into 15-second spots broadcast on NBC 5, and all are trumpeted on the CATA's weekly radio show, "Drive Chicago," at 8 a.m. Saturdays on WLS 890 AM; and on the association's website, ChicagolandDealersCare.com.

To discuss this program in more detail, contact the CATA's Sandi Potempa at (630) 424-6065 or spotempa@cata.info.

CATA holiday closings

The CATA office in Oakbrook Terrace will be closed Monday, Dec. 26 to mark the Christmas holiday; and Monday, Jan. 2 for New Year's Day.

Happy holidays to all!



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The CATA Bulletin is distributed via blast e-mail every other Friday except during the Chicago Auto Show, when it is not produced.

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

Review past editions dating to 1998 or search by subject at www.cata.info.

David E. Sloan
Erik K. Higgins

President, Publisher
Editor, Director of Dealer Affairs

'Car Lot Cowboy' dishes tough love, advice to dealerships

There are a lot of badly run car dealerships out there, according to Tom Stuker, the self-proclaimed dealer "doctor."

Stuker is a consultant from Bloomingdale who travels around the country helping dealers improve their business.

He just wrapped up filming a series for Spike TV called "Car Lot Cowboy" that will debut early next year. In a cross between "Supernanny" and "Kitchen Nightmares," the reality show follows Stuker and his team as they work to turn around sales at beleaguered

dealerships across the country, dishing out some tough love and advice.

Stuker said the date for the premiere is still being determined. The episodes shot to date feature both new and used dealerships in New Jersey, Florida, New Orleans, South Carolina and California, who sell a variety of brands.

One hourlong episode features a Chrysler dealer who rebuilt in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and runs a food bank to help the community. Another dealer



Stuker tries to help prefers attractive but untrained women in the showroom over knowledgeable sales staff.

With his signature black cowboy hat and boots, Stuker said he has helped about 15,000 dealerships in his career.

"The industry is as screwed up as when I was a salesman," said the man who started selling cars as a single 20-year-old in Rockford in 1975.

He learned quickly that "you need to think like a salesperson but don't sound

like one."

Over his career he has seen common problems at struggling dealerships boil down to poor hiring practices which fail to get strong sales staff; limited training including when sales staff are promoted to management but lack business skills; and accountability.

Most dealerships don't have complete logs of all their showroom traffic or data on their demonstration or closing rates, Stuker said.

With some guidance, "I could teach a monkey to sell 12 cars a month," Stuker said.

Iraq war vet, disabled child receive canine companions from NADA Foundation

The National Automobile Dealers Charitable Foundation has provided a \$20,000 grant to help fund the training of two assistance dogs from Canine Companions for Independence.



Charles Chesnes, a 10-year-old from Delaware, Ohio, is a physically disabled child who uses a wheelchair. Chesnes received his skilled companion dog, Katrina, on Saturday, Nov. 12.

Adam McCann, a former Marine from Oberlin, Ohio, who was injured in the Iraq war, received his dog, Holt, last February.

Since 2002, the NADA Foundation – through its Frank E. McCarthy Memorial Fund – has contributed \$140,000 to Canine Companions for Independence and placed 14 skilled companion dogs.

No more lead wheel weights beginning Jan. 1

As a reminder, an Illinois law effective Jan. 1 will forbid the use of wheel and tire balancing weights made of lead or mercury.

When Illinois enacted the law in July 2010, it joined six other states to use legislation to ban the wheel weights because of health and environmental concerns. The 18-month grace period was designed to allow dealers to sell or install their remaining inventories of the wheel weights. Other states have used voluntary bans.

While several wheel weight manu-

facturers have begun touting their alternatives to lead, the consensus in the industry is that steel is the superior alternative. Because of its high density, smaller size, cost advantage and environmentally friendly composition, steel significantly surpasses all other lead alternatives, including zinc.

Inventories of lead and mercury weights remaining after this year can be disposed of as fully regulated hazardous waste, or they can be recycled as scrap metal, which exempts them from hazardous waste regulation.

'12 annual fuel economy guide now available

The U.S. Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency have released the 2012 Fuel Economy Guide. The guide provides detailed fuel economy numbers for MY 2012 light-duty vehicles, along with estimated annual fuel costs and other information for prospective purchasers.

Dealers must display a copy of the guide and provide copies to customers upon request. There are a number of

options available for dealers to comply. The governmental agencies can electronically distribute the guide to dealers for printing as needed. Dealers also can download the file, save it and print it as necessary. See www.fueleconomy.gov/feg/pdfs/guides/FEG2012.pdf

Finally, dealers can order hard copies of the guide by calling the DOE's Information Center at (877) 337-3463 between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. CST.

Goal: more sales, more luxury in '12

As 2011 concludes with the pace of auto sales accelerating, analysts said it makes sense to expect the trend will continue next year.

And it seems likely that that new products, led by the BMW-3 Series and 2013 versions of the Ford Fusion and Chevrolet Malibu, will lure buyers in their segments, and also that 2012's biggest auto industry stories could include fulfillment of Volkswagen's promise to grow its U.S. market share.

"Volkswagen is one of the largest [automakers] in the world, yet what they sell in the U.S. is peanuts," said TrueCar.com market analyst Jesse Toprak. Volkswagen's U.S. focus was underscored by the opening of a Chattanooga, Tenn., plant in May.

Automakers aren't quite ready to issue 2012 sales forecasts, but Toprak expects 2012 light vehicle sales of 13.8 million units, up from about 12.8 million in 2011.

"The fundamental consumer demand has improved this year and will continue to improve further in 2012," Toprak said. "The myth of pent-up demand has turned out to be at least partially true: Consumers at some point need to get a new car."

Widespread projections of continued economic growth, albeit slow growth, combined with a surge in sales in the current quarter, buttress expectations for continued growth in 2012 sales.

Among new products, the most important 2012 introduction could well be the BMW 3-Series, debuting next

month at the Detroit Auto Show, with a market launch in February. "The 3-Series has generated a lot of buzz," says Ed Loh, editor-in-chief of Motor Trend. "This is the bread and butter luxury segment, and I think it will see growth in 2012."

Loh said GM will seek to challenge BMW's segment dominance with the 2013 Cadillac ATS, which is slated to make its world premier at the Detroit show. Production will begin next summer.

"The ATS is a crucial part of Cadillac's expansion," Mary Barra, GM senior vice president of global product development, said recently. "ATS enters the biggest market segment in the global luxury car industry, both in terms of volume and importance."

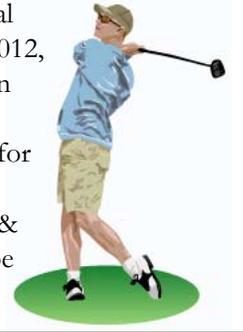
The segment is dominated by German cars including the BMW 3-Series, Mercedes C-Class and Audi A4, Barra acknowledged, but, "We've developed a compelling and convincing new challenger."

Sales of Toyota's luxury Lexus GS also are slated to begin early in 2012. "The Lexus GS is coming at a time that is very critical to Lexus, which has been accused of losing its way and making boring cars aiming at the suburbs," Loh said. Toyota President Akio Toyoda "has said 'We need to make more exciting cars,'" Loh noted.

In the mid-sized category, sales of the 2013 Malibu will begin in the first quarter, while Ford will unveil its 2013 Fusion at auto shows this winter.

Save the date!

After a three-year hiatus, the annual CATA golf outing returns June 11, 2012, to Cog Hill Golf and Country Club in Lemont. Player registration likely will begin in April. Watch this newsletter for more details. The outing will be held in lieu of the CATA Dealer Meeting & Expo. Sponsorship possibilities will be announced this spring.



Most popular car-theft holiday nears

The holiday season is in full swing, but remember that vehicle thieves rarely take a holiday. Indeed, one study ranks New Year's Day as the most vehicle-theft-prone holiday over the past several years.

The analysis by the Des Plaines-based National Insurance Crime Bureau counts Christmas Day as the holiday with the fewest reported vehicle thefts.

Vehicle thefts nationally have declined for seven consecutive years. But there always is a black market for items obtained by theft, and vehicles remain popular theft targets.

The NCIB is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preventing, detecting and defeating insurance fraud and vehicle theft through data analytics, investigations, training, legislative advocacy and public awareness. Its study examined vehicle thefts reported on 11 holidays in 2010.

There were 2,347 car thefts reported stolen Jan. 1, 2010, more than 200 cars stronger than the No. 2 holiday (Memorial Day; 2,122 thefts).

"While Americans are enjoying the holidays and most have time off from work, we need to remember that holidays are just another day at the shop for vehicle thieves," the NICB stressed in a news release.

New Year's Eve also ranked high on the list (No. 5) with 1,986 thefts, followed by Christmas Eve (1,928) in sixth. Christmas Day ranked 11th with 1,361 stolen cars.

"The NICB reminds drivers to be alert during the busy holiday season. That includes parking in well-lit areas, keeping packages in the trunk or out of sight and making sure your vehicle is locked while it's parked," the bureau stated.

The complete ranking of the 11 holidays from 2010 were as follows:

1. New Year's Day (2,347)
2. Memorial Day (2,122)
3. Halloween (2,064)
4. Labor Day (2,020)
5. New Year's Eve (1,986)
6. Christmas Eve (1,928)
7. Independence Day (1,914)
8. President's Day (1,903)
9. Valentine's Day (1,745)
10. Thanksgiving (1,605)
11. Christmas Day (1,361)