



CATA Bulletin

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Chicago 2005: Another landmark auto show

Landmarks can be defined a number of ways. They can be an object that marks boundaries or a locality. They can be a structure that's used as a point of orientation in relation to other structures. They can be an event or development that marks a turning point or a stage. And they can also be a structure of unusual historic and aesthetic interest.

The 2005 Chicago Auto Show, Feb. 11-20 at McCormick Place, meets all those criteria.

Since its inception in 1901, the Chicago Auto Show has continually stepped up to the plate to bring new vehicles, new displays and new attractions to its audience. The 97th edition of this great tradition appears to have all the right ingredients in place.

"We've never had such a pre-show buzz as we have this year," said 2005 Chicago Auto Show Chairman Casey Wickstrom.

"There's a great deal of anticipation about the new cars, trucks, SUVs, project cars and the show-stopper concepts that will fill more of McCormick Place than the public has ever seen.

"This year's expansion to a whopping 1.2 million square feet—42 percent larger than last year—at Chicago's spacious lakeside exhibit center will give to people a show they won't soon forget."

One notable addition to the expanded displays will be found in the



the Chrysler Group's display, which recalled the first Chicago Auto Show in 1901, when an indoor test track was built to familiarize the public with what then was a new mode of transportation.

Culling the 'everything old is new again' axiom, Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep will construct a half-mile, indoor test track on which showgoers will be able to actually experience the products in action.

Jeep will have a challenging off-road course, while the ride and handling of Chrysler cars and Dodge trucks will use other areas of the track.

The public will have two halls to explore this year: McCormick Place North and South.

"Families may want to plan to stay a bit longer at the show this year," said Wickstrom. "We have always been the largest auto show in North America, but the expansion to the second hall makes the Chicago Auto Show the world's third largest auto show, behind only Frankfurt and Paris."

First Look for Charity

First Look for Charity, held the

evening before the Chicago Auto Show opens to the public, is the auto show's benevolent black-tie event. It is among Chicago's biggest single-day charity fund raisers.

'First Look' is an anticipated event among socialites and car buffs alike. The black-tie affair allows participants to stroll the show floor amid opulence not present during the public portion of the Chicago Auto Show.

Abundant hors d'oeuvres, champagne, wine and soft drinks await those getting the first look at the more than 1,000 new vehicles—some on display for the first time anywhere—at the Chicago Auto Show.

As has become customary, one patron could win big, too. A loaded 2005 Chevrolet Corvette convertible valued at more than \$57,000 is the event's door prize.

Tickets are \$200 each and can be purchased at www.chicago-autoshow.com or 630-424-1636.

The Age of Personalization: SEMA

In a time when people like to individualize everything in their lives, the ability to personalize their vehicles is a phenomenon that is growing dramatically.

In some circles the process of customizing vehicles with special wheels, tires, bodywork, audio and other accessories is called "tuning." The people

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Auto Show

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who know more about vehicle specialization best are the members of the Specialty Equipment Market Association. The SEMA show, each November in Las Vegas, draws huge numbers of wholesalers and retailers looking for what the “next big thing” is in the field, but the show is closed to the public.

Recognizing that the mild-to-wild equipment that is available for the public to “tune” their cars and trucks has grown to a \$29 billion annual business, the Chicago Auto Show teamed up with SEMA to bring special “project vehicles” and displays to the Windy City’s show.

“We looked at shows across America and came to the conclusion that Chicago offered us the best opportunity to spread the word about our business,” said Carl Sheffer, vice president of manufacturer relations for the California-based association. “I think our display there will open a lot of eyes as to how widespread this has become.”

New Displays and Manufacturers

In addition to the SEMA project cars, Chicago show patrons will see some brands they might not have seen anywhere before. The economical Smart brand of cars, built by Mercedes-Benz, will make its first appearance in Chicago this year. In a time when horsepower seems to be all

the rage, the other end of the spectrum is being addressed by this line of vehicles that have gained huge popularity in Europe.

Chicago’s International truck will grab a sizeable chunk of McCormick Place floor to show its products, including a world introduction of a new consumer-friendly vehicle that will be a sibling to the CXT Concept the company introduced three months ago. It’ll be a surprise you won’t want to miss.

Dub Magazine will roll out its incredible stable of Chrysler Tuner Vehicles for Chicago, as well. The Dub cars have proven to be crowd-pleasers with their edgy-urban styling and avant garde’ presence.

Chicago is a Landmark Show

The size, the magnitude and the newest attractions in the automotive world will again make Chicago the nation’s most influential consumer auto show.

“Our show is where people come to see a truly spectacular event,” said show Chairman Wickstrom. “Over the past century, the Chicago Auto Show has proven to be a terrific day of family fun.

“We constantly hear our show patrons tell stories of how, when they were kids, they came to the show with their parents. Those are lasting memories for many—and now they want to continue that tradition with their children. Whether you’re a car junkie or just love the spectacle of magnificent displays, McCormick Place is where you’re going to want to be Feb. 11-20.

“We’re a landmark, from our building to the displays inside it and to the tradition we share with millions of people. It’s a continuing challenge for us to make this show great for Chicagoans, and I think this year we won’t let them down.”

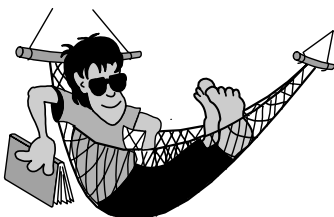
The Chicago Auto Show is open to the public Feb. 11-20 at McCormick Place, 23rd Street at Lake Shore Drive. Hours are daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. except Feb. 20, when the doors will close at 8 p.m. Tickets are available at the door or online at DriveChicago.com/

Congratulations!

Kevin Mize (District B, Chicago), president of O’Hare Honda in Des Plaines, and **Greg Bosak** (District D, South Chicago/Northwest Indiana/Eastern Iowa), president of Bosak Honda in Highland, Ind., have been elected to the National Dealer Council of American Honda Motor Co.

Six district delegates represent all of Honda’s Midwest dealers on the national council. Mize is chairman of the Midwest Zone, and Bosak is the Zone Chairman Alternate.

Bulletin on hiatus



This biweekly newsletter takes a one-edition break in deference to the 2005 Chicago Auto Show. Watch for the next issue dated Feb. 28.

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18W200 Butterfield Road

Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181-4810

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

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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

More fans of manual transmissions shift gears to automatics

The stick shift, an automotive mainstay since the invention of the “horseless carriage,” slowly is going the way of the tailfin and carburetor.

Thanks to technological advances and drivers looking for an easier way to navigate congested roadways, the old standard manual transmission doesn’t come standard much anymore.

“One more generation and you’ll probably have people who have absolutely no idea what a three-pedal car does,” said Bill Visnic, editor of an automotive trade magazine.

By 2012, just 6 percent of all vehicles sold in the North American market will have manual transmissions, according to a forecast by Germany’s ZF Industries, the world’s largest independent transmission maker.

In 2002, 10 percent of vehicles sold in the United States and Canada were equipped with manual gearboxes.

The trend also is occurring in European markets. In the United Kingdom, automatic transmissions are on pace to reach 15 percent of all models.

Even heavy-duty and commercial trucks are making the switch. Over an

eight-year span beginning in 1996, the popularity of automatic transmissions among heavy trucks rose from 5 percent to 18 percent, reports show.

Motoring purists lament the change, claiming car and motorist are only connected when the driver is shifting gears.

But for some, the fun of operating slick new automatic transmissions—some of which enable drivers to shift without a clutch—now rival the old standard gearbox. Increased traffic congestion has reduced the manual experience to drudgery for others.

Edmund Handwerker, a 19-year-old student in New York, has a 1996 Mazda Miata with an automatic transmission. “Everyone asks, ‘How come you don’t get a manual? A Miata should be manual.’ I get that from everyone,” said Handwerker. “I live in Brooklyn and I’m in stop-and-go traffic all the time.”

In a car equipped with a manual transmission, gridlock can mean pushing and releasing a clutch pedal again and again. Plus, since some pedals are stiffer than others, driving can be physically exhausting. And talking on a cell phone and sipping coffee—favorite

pastimes of today’s drivers—is much easier without having to shift gears.

Shifting is not missed

Ted Marshall drives 30,000 miles a year for work, so he made sure his ’04 Pontiac GTO had an automatic transmission. And he doesn’t miss the sporty feeling associated with shifting.

Reversing a decades-old industry marketing equation, Pontiac designated automatic transmission as standard equipment on the GTO. The 6-speed manual, which it shares with the Chevrolet Corvette, is a \$695 option.

If manual transmissions become scarce, most dealers won’t grieve.

“We used to have the manual trans available on the Grand Am,” said Ed McDade, sales manager at a Detroit dealership. “When I stocked them, they’d just sit. In the past, the small economical cars with a stick would be the way to go because they were even cheaper. It’s not the case any more.”

Skill is not learned

As automatic transmissions proliferated in the last half-century, fewer and fewer people learned the time-hon-

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Many new faces among Polk loyalty award winners

General Motors won for the fifth consecutive year in the Overall Manufacturer category, in results of the ninth annual Polk Automotive Loyalty Awards, announced this month. Ford has won the Overall Make Award every year.

There were six repeat winners from 2003 within the segment level categories, all truck-based vehicles. The car segments all saw new winners. Jaguar and Land Rover each took home their first awards.

Polk Automotive Loyalty Award winners, 2004 Model Year

<u>Category</u>	<u>Winner (*2003 Winner)</u>	<u>Loyalty %</u>	<u>Avg. Loyalty % for Category</u>
Overall Awards			
Manufacturer Loyalty	General Motors*	65.1	54.6
Make Loyalty	Ford Division*	57.4	44.8
Vehicle Segment Awards			
Small car	Saturn ION	30.6	13.9
Midsized car	Toyota Camry	28.0	19.2
Large car	Buick LeSabre	41.2	29.3
Luxury car	Cadillac DeVille	40.9	18.8
Prestige Luxury car	Lexus LS 430	32.7	25.9
Sports car	Ford Mustang	15.0	9.0
Prestige Sports car	Jaguar XK	22.8	15.4
Minivan	Chrysler Town & Country*	25.8	14.0
Compact Pickup truck	Ford Ranger*	18.2	13.2
Full-size Pickup truck	Ford F-Series*	42.7	36.7
Compact SUV	Subaru Forester*	25.2	16.3
Midsized SUV	Mercury Mountaineer*	32.9	18.1
Full-size SUV	Ford Expedition*	27.1	22.1
Prestige SUV	Land Rover Range Rover	33.9	21.6

Cambridge deflects unemployment claims

One hundred twelve CATA dealer members reported a combined 446 unemployment claims during the fourth quarter of 2004 to Cambridge Integrated Services Group, Inc., which formerly operated as the Martin Boyer Co. The company's efforts saved those dealers a total of \$772,746 in benefits by contesting the claims.

Cambridge monitors any unemployment claims against its clients. About 200 CATA dealers are clients of the company.

Claims that can be protested and subsequently denied help minimize an employer's unemployment tax rate. The rate can vary between .06 percent and 6.8 percent of each employee's first \$9,000 of earnings. The average unemployment tax rate among Illinois em-

ployers is 3.1 percent, or \$279 annually.

"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 \$2.10 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.

Cambridge has represented CATA members since 1979. To discuss retaining the company, call Schardt at 312-381-8241.

Consider 'adopting' a school for Chicago Auto Show

Dealerships can plant a benevolent seed with students by sponsoring a school group's visit to the 2004 Chicago Auto Show. The measure can be a community relations plum and establish customer loyalty with young consumers.

Under the Adopt-A-School Program, a dealership can purchase tickets at \$5 each for students in a group. There is no minimum or maximum potential group size. See the flyer in the print edition of this newsletter.

High schoolers at or near driving age are logical students for a dealership to pair itself with. There are hundreds and hundreds of high schools in the Chicago area, probably more than one within each dealer's relevant market area.

Bill Stasek, proprietor of Bill Stasek Chevrolet in Wheeling, last year sponsored more than 100 students each from nearby Buffalo Grove High School, John Hersey High School in Arlington Heights, and Vanguard School in Wheeling. Accompanying chaperones are admitted at no charge.

"The schools look forward to the auto show so much, and they wouldn't be able to go without this program," Stasek said. "They really appreciate it, so it creates a lot of goodwill with the schools."

In the program, dealers contact a school's principal or assistant principal to arrange the weekday field trip. Stasek met the groups at McCormick Place and even popped for lunches for everyone.

Dealers interested in "adopting" a school should contact the CATA's Donna Young for more details, at 630-424-6045.

Marketplace

GM Results-oriented with extensive dealership general management experience. Expert in new and used sales management, F&I, reconditioning, staff development, training, motivation, advertising, inventory acquisition, forecasting, budgeting, customer service and asset management. Contract employment periods available. Anonymous; call the CATA.

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

Office Manager 18 years experience. Expertise in GM, Mercedes-Benz and Mazda dealership financial management, reporting, analysis, inventory control, more. Reynolds and Reynolds ERA system. James McCallister, 815-464-7665.

Résumés of all candidates on file at the CATA.

Shift

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

ored skill of coordinating clutch, shifter and throttle, McDade said. And the inability to drive a stick seems to know no boundaries.

Jason Vines, vice president of communications for DaimlerChrysler AG, recalls accommodating a test drive re-

quest from an automotive writer from a national publication. The request was for a Dodge Viper.

"We had it delivered and the journalist goes, 'This is a stick! I can't drive a stick!'" Vines said, noting Dodge doesn't offer the Viper any other way.

And pity Roy P. Bougie of Blaine, Minn. He's doing 10 years for a 2000 carjacking that failed because he couldn't drive the vehicle he'd stolen.