

# SAVING OIL SAVES JOBS!

## Green Machines 'Midwest Road Trip' Spreads the Word

The green automobiles of tomorrow are already here today. They're being built by UAW workers across the Midwest and they are saving oil, reducing pollution, and generating jobs.

The Ecology Center's Auto Project has been delivering that message since it founded the Green Machines Tour in 2004. At the heart of it all is a groundbreaking alliance between organized labor, environmentalists, the auto industry, and elected officials. The common goal: Keep the domestic automobile industry competitive by promoting clean, cutting-edge automotive technologies that create jobs and spur economic growth.

To best illustrate what that looks like in practice, Ecology Center Auto Project Director Charles Griffith and Auto Project Coordinator Claudette Juska recently took an official Green Machines Road Trip. Driving a union-made Saturn Vue "Green Line" hybrid electric car, the intrepid duo plus camera "crew" made their way across snowy highways in seven states, making stops at union halls, factories, farms, government offices, research institutes, diners and gas stations – talking, listening, learning, and getting folks to sign their "Marshall Plan" for the auto industry (see **Take Action!** box). And, of course, blogging.

What follows are excerpts from the online Green Machines Road Trip blog. You can read the entire entries, see video interviews and photos, explore related links, delve into archives, see a map of the Trip, add your own comments, and more, all at [www.greenmachinestour.org](http://www.greenmachinestour.org).

— Ted Sylvester, Editor



**JANUARY 18, 2007**

### What is a Green Machine?

One might question the idea of a road trip through the northern Midwest region in the middle of January when there's nothing but snow flurries and blustering winds all around. But we're Michiganders, with adventurous spirits ... By the time we're done, people from Minneapolis to Detroit will know all about Green Machines and why they're so important for our economy.

**JANUARY 20, 2007**

### Saving the Ford 'Twin Cities' Plant

Today we officially kicked off the Green Machines Road Trip at the Ford Twin Cities plant here in St. Paul. UAW Local 879 is hosting a Labor and Sustainability Conference focused on the climate crisis and worker-friendly strategies for addressing it. The local represents retirees and about 1800 workers at the Ford plant, half of whom have just taken buy-outs from Ford, and the rest of whom will be laid off or transferred when the plant shuts down next year. ... The story of this

plant exemplifies the need for stronger policies to encourage investment in energy-saving technologies.

**JANUARY 21, 2007**

### Plug-ins in Minnesota?

One of the other meetings we attended while in St. Paul was the Legislative Task Force on Plug-in Electric Hybrid Vehicles (PHEV). The Task Force was established by the legislature last year to identify barriers to plug-in hybrid vehicles and possible financial incentives to encourage Ford to produce such vehicles at its St. Paul plant.

**JANUARY 21, 2007**

### Talkin' Biofuels with Jim

Minneapolis is also home to the renowned Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP), where we met up with researcher/advocate Jim Kleinschmit. Jim has a family farming background raising grass-fed beef cattle, and now specializes in agricultural policies related to the booming biofuels industry. ... We spoke with Jim about the role of biofuels in helping to build local economic opportunities in rural America ...

**JANUARY 22, 2007**

### The Corn's Cookin' in Iowa

After leaving St. Paul, we made our way over snow-covered highways early on Sunday morning to stop in Lakota, Iowa. Even if we didn't have directions to Global Ethanol Services (formerly Midwest Grain Processors), we probably could have found our way there by rolling down the windows and following the smell of cornbread. We hadn't expected an ethanol plant to smell so good!

**JANUARY 23, 2007**

### Growing the BioEconomy in Wisconsin

We started out our day at the Madison hilltop offices of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, where we met with Secretary Rod Nilsestuen and his top policy director, Gary Radloff. The Secretary shared his strong optimism for growing Wisconsin's bio-economy, tying together the strong agricultural and forest products industries in the state with its vibrant manufacturing sector.

**JANUARY 23, 2007**

### Crossovers Bring Jobs to Belvidere, Illinois

Before we got there we thought we already knew the story about Belvidere's newly renovated assembly plant, but it turns out there was even more good news there than we had thought. ... We had heard that Chrysler created a bunch of jobs at the plant when they

renovated to build the new cross-overs last year, but didn't know all the details. We found out today that union employment at the plant went from 1700 before the renovations to 3600 after. In addition, we also found out that an entire supplier park was created in the surrounding neighborhoods and now employs 2900 workers, all of who have been organized in the past year. That's 4800 new jobs in the Belvidere area – what an enormous impact that must have on the local economy!

**JANUARY 23, 2007**

### Flex-Fuel SUVs in Janesville, Wisconsin

Today we stopped near the Wisconsin-Illinois border to visit GM's Janesville Assembly plant, which builds the Chevy Tahoe, GMC Yukon, and Chevy Suburban. We were greeted by leadership from UAW Local 95, who were interested to learn more about the kinds of fuel-efficient technologies we are promoting and the chances of GM actually making the Chevy Volt plug-in electric concept vehicle that debuted at the North American Auto Show last week.

**JANUARY 24, 2007**

### Greening Fleets in Chicago

Next we drove down to Chicago, or at least one of its suburbs, to talk with members of the Chicago Area Clean Cities Coalition. These are primarily local government folks that are leading the way on purchasing clean fuels

and clean vehicle technologies in the Chicago metropolitan area.

**JANUARY 24, 2007**

### Hybrids in Indianapolis

We spent today in Indianapolis, visiting folks at GM's Allison Transmission Division. Allison makes transmissions for commercial and military applications, including transit buses. ... In recent years, the division has gone a step further and re-engineered its system to be used in GM's light-duty cars and trucks. The first application of the new two-mode hybrid system will be launched later this year on the Chevrolet Tahoe and GMC Yukon, and will be

**TAKE ACTION!**  
*Tell Congress to  
Save Oil & Save Jobs!*

One of the main goals of the Green Machines Road Trip is to help mobilize the public and a wide variety of allies to support a new "Marshall Plan" for the auto industry. Let Congress know that you care about saving oil and saving jobs! Take part in a postcard and Internet campaign asking senators and congressional representatives to support legislation that creates jobs, reduces dependence on foreign oil, and improves vehicle fuel efficiency.

**VISIT**  
[www.greenmachinestour.org](http://www.greenmachinestour.org)  
*and act now!*



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### JANUARY 26, 2007

#### Green Manufacturing in Ohio

This morning we were in Toledo, Ohio, meeting with Lloyd Mahaffey, Director of UAW Region 2B. Lloyd told us about initiatives in Ohio that are aimed at generating jobs in the green manufacturing sector, and mentioned some really innovative ideas.

### JANUARY 29, 2007

#### 34,000 Jobs for Michigan

We finally made it back home to Michigan, and spent today meeting with UAW leadership up at Region 1C in Lansing. Members up there are real excited about the new assembly plant in Delta Township that builds GM's crossovers: the Saturn Outlook, GMC Acadia and Buick Enclave.

### FEBRUARY 1, 2007

#### Saving Oil & Greening Fleets in Michigan

Back home in Michigan, on a cold January day, we met with some of the people that are taking action to save oil. The Ann Arbor area Clean Cities Coalition has been one of the leaders of the Green Fleets movement. We met at the City of Ann Arbor's fleet garage where fleet services manager Tom Gibbons operates his fleet of nearly 400 vehicles, most of which use renewable and alternative fuels.

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