

'Green Machines Tour' Comes Home

► Fuel-Efficient Vehicles and Technologies Showcased at Local Tech Forum

By Claudette Juska

The Ecology Center's Green Machines Tour continues to defy expectations. A mid-summer Technology Forum once again brought together a set of unlikely partners in pursuit of common goals. Co-sponsored by the United Auto Worker's Region 1A and the Ecology Center, the forum featured a press conference, a technology showcase, and a policy roundtable discussion all centered around new, environmentally friendly vehicle technologies.

The June 24 Green Machines Tour event, like other tour stops in the Midwest in the past year, is part of a traveling educational campaign that brings together environmental groups and labor organizations, his-



A roundtable discussion included representatives from labor, environmental and conservation groups, the auto industry, federal and state agencies, and elected officials.

PHOTO: TED STYWESTER

torically at odds over fuel-economy standards, to promote hybrids and other fuel-efficient technologies that create good-paying union jobs and support a cleaner environment.

Forum participants included representatives from the UAW, the Ecology Center, the Apollo Alliance, Sena-

and other auto components produced in Southeast Michigan.

Keynote speaker, David Hollister, the Director of Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Growth, stressed the importance of policymaking in Lansing in shaping the future of the auto industry in the state. "Michigan is fortunate to have attracted important new investments in advanced, fuel-efficient technologies," said Hollister. "But we can and must do more to keep Michigan competitive. Passage of the governor's bond proposal, as well as expanding advanced-vehicle incentives in Michigan legislation and federal legislation, would go a long way toward ensuring that Michigan retains its automotive leadership."

Ecology Center Auto Project Director Charles Griffith highlighted both the environmental and economic benefits of fuel-efficient technologies now emerging in vehicle components, while emphasizing the need for tax incentives for manufacturers and consumers of these products.

Griffith pointed to a new six-speed transmission on display – made by

"Expanding advanced-vehicle incentives in Michigan legislation and federal legislation would go a long way toward ensuring that Michigan retains its automotive leadership."

— David Hollister, the Director of Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Growth



Detroit Diesel's new diesel engine with advanced emission control technology was one of many displays at the Green Machines forum.

PHOTO: TED STYWESTER

tor Levin's office, the EPA, the Center for Automotive Research, the Michigan Economic Development Council, Environmental Defense, Sierra Club, National Wildlife Federation, and a number of other federal, state, and local officials.

The forum, held at UAW Local 735 in Canton, Michigan, featured displays of UAW-made advanced-technology vehicles as well as engines, transmissions,

UAW Local 735 members at GM's Willow Run plant in Ypsilanti – as a shining example of the type of technology that U.S. automakers are developing to help increase fuel-efficiency and remain competitive in the global automotive industry.

The new transmission, he said, will not only increase the fuel-economy of vehicles by up to 8%, but has also created over \$600 million in local investment and preserved 650 UAW jobs that may otherwise have been lost.

Griffith further identified other auto companies in the region that are investing in similar technologies. Ford is investing \$170 million in its Livonia transmission plant to make a six-speed

All together the advanced technology auto components that will be manufactured in Region 1A will increase the fuel-economy of more than 2 million vehicles per year by anywhere from 4 to 20%.

translates into the same amount of fuel savings that would result from putting 500,000 new hybrids on the road each year. (In 2004, less than 100,000 hybrids were sold nationwide).

While having an important impact on fuel-economy, said Griffith, the advanced technologies are also providing significant benefits to Michigan's economy by creating a total of \$1.5 billion in new investment, and preserving or creating over 2,300 UAW jobs.

Both Griffith and UAW Region

vehicles and their components would create over 59,000 jobs and more than pay for itself through increased federal, state, and local tax revenues. This approach would also lower the cost of hybrid and diesel vehicles for consumers, improve fuel economy, reduce emissions, and reduce U.S. dependence on foreign oil.

According to the study, without such incentives the majority of hybrid and advanced-diesel vehicles will likely be imported, resulting in up



Press conference speakers included UAW Region 1A representative Jim Pedersen (at podium), Michigan Dept. of Labor and Economic Growth Director David Hollister, and Ecology Center Auto Project Director Charles Griffith.



Participants at the Green Machines Technology Forum discuss some of the advanced technologies vehicles on display.

transmission. Detroit Diesel is investing \$275 million and preserving 1,300 UAW jobs by beginning production of new heavy-duty diesel engines with advanced emission controls. DaimlerChrysler, together with Mitsubishi and Hyundai, is investing in new factories in Dundee that will build fuel-efficient 4-cylinder engines for smaller vehicles. The first of the new plants is creating \$700 million in investment and will result in over 500 new UAW jobs.

All together the advanced technology auto components that will be manufactured in Region 1A will increase the fuel-economy of more than 2 million vehicles per year by anywhere from 4 to 20%. This roughly

1A representative Jim Pedersen agreed that increasing manufacturer incentives for these types of technologies would

to 200,000 lost jobs and \$2.8 billion per year in lost federal tax revenues, with the majority of job and tax losses

Advanced technologies are also providing significant benefits to Michigan's economy by creating a total of \$1.5 billion in new investment, and preserving or creating over 2,300 UAW jobs.

encourage more companies to invest in facilities here in Michigan and could lure new businesses into the region.

They point to a recent study by the University of Michigan Office for the Study of Automotive Transportation (OSAT) that found a tax credit for investments in U.S. facilities that produce hybrid and diesel

being concentrated in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana.

More information about the Green Machines Tour, policy options, and upcoming events can be found at www.greenmachinestour.org.

Claudette Juska works with the Ecology Center's Auto Project.