Friday, May 15, 2009

Auto industry leaders to discuss business beyond the current crisis

With Chrysler in bankruptcy and an increasing likelihood that General Motors will face the same fate, the U.S. auto industry is struggling to reinvent itself amid a crippling economic downturn.

At this crucial juncture, the Center for Integrated Business Research and Education (CIBRE) at Oakland University and the International Motor Vehicle Program (IMVP) will welcome senior automotive executives and industry thought leaders in a forum focusing on current challenges and new directions.

Oakland, a doctoral/research university located within minutes of the Chrysler Headquarters and Technology Center in Auburn Hills, is pleased to host “New Futures for the Auto Industry – An International Motor Vehicle Program.” The IMVP, a global network of researchers dedicated to studying the automotive industry, was founded at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is co-directed by John Paul MacDuffie, a management professor at the Wharton School of Business, and Charles Fine, the Chrysler LFM Professor of Management at the MIT Sloan School of Management.

The event’s keynote speakers will be Jerome York, chairman, president and CEO of the private investment company Harwinton Capital and an aide to billionaire investor Kirk Kerkorian; and William Santana Li, chairman and CEO of Carbon Motors, a homeland security company working to manufacture the world's first purpose-built police car.

The forum, scheduled from 12:45-6 p.m. on Tuesday, June 9, also will host executives, managers, researchers, academics and others in an exchange of ideas that already have begun to transform the automotive industry.

“As the economy recovers from the worst recession in generations … it will be important to understand what the structure of the auto industry may look like, what companies will be left standing and how will they be managed, what types of products those companies will produce, and how consumer wants and needs will be satisfied while dealing with greater regulation,” said Janell D. Townsend, an OU assistant professor of marketing and international business, and an event organizer.

MacDuffie added, “It is critical we look beyond the crisis to ask fundamental questions about how and why the automotive world will be different, and where it may look more or less the same.”

In his presentation, Li will address the creation of new business models that look outside traditional boundaries of the automotive industry. York will speak about the future of industry governance in light of many changes precipitated by the current economic crisis.

In addition, Toyota Motor Company advisor Dennis Cuneo will host a roundtable discussion focusing on the future of the supply base, and a panel session moderated by CNBC auto industry analyst Phil LeBeau will focus on the nature of the automobile industry’s green future.

Other speakers will include Wall Street expert John Casesa of Casesa Shapiro Group LLC, who will address the financial future of the industry; Michael Robinet, vice president of Global Vehicle Forecasts, CSM, who will reflect on how forecasters may change their outlook based on emerging trends; and Glenn Mercer, an automotive consultant and IMVP senior director, who will discuss the aftermarket and service implications for the future.

The forum will take place in the Oakland Center on the campus of Oakland University. An evening reception will follow at Meadow Brook Hall, the historic home of Matilda Dodge Wilson, Oakland University founder and widow of auto pioneer John Dodge.

Registration is $49 and attendance at the optional reception also is $49. A discount registration fee of $75 is available for both. For more information or to register, visit www.sba.oakland.edu/ce/career_dev.asp, then click IMVP under Seminars & Conferences.

SUMMARY
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Modified by David Groves (groves@oakland.edu) on Friday, May 15, 2009
Article Start Date: Friday, May 15, 2009