

Ford Fund Opens Resource Center For Detroiters

Ford Motor Company Fund last week opened a new community center – the Ford Resource and Engagement Center – in Southwest Detroit to strengthen a key city neighborhood and support diverse cultural and community programs provided by nonprofits.

Ford Motor Company Executive Chairman Bill Ford and Detroit Mayor Dave Bing were on hand to open the doors of the new center and participate in the community celebration.

In an unusual move by a corporate foundation, Ford Fund is overseeing management of the new center and funding physical upgrades, maintenance and all operating costs for the building, which is under long-term lease.

“Next month, we mark the 150th birthday of Henry Ford, whose unique vision not only made personal transportation affordable, but left a lasting impact on communities where his employees and customers lived,” said Jim Vella, president, Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services.

“Ford Motor Company has been making investments in Detroit for more than a century, and today’s opening of the Ford Resource and Engagement Center demonstrates our ongoing commitment to the city.”

Antique, Modified Vehicles to Shine at St. Ignace Car Show

by Jim Stickford

Car lovers will have the chance to enjoy Michigan’s great natural beauty at the 38th annual St. Ignace Car Show June 27-29.

Event Director Ed Reavie said he’s been with the show since its inception back in 1976.

“We simply call the event the St. Ignace Car Show,” Reavie said. “We have shortened it up. Back when we started, we called the event, ‘The Straights Area Antique Auto Show.’”

Reavie said that show was for antique vehicles, which are classified as being at least 25 years old. Any parts used in repairs also had to be original repair parts or from other vehicles of the same make, model and year.

Over the years, using the term, “Straights,” in the title was confusing to some people, Reavie said. Additionally, they started attracting a lot of vehicle modifiers.

A modified vehicle, he said, can be newer than 25 years, and it’s perfectly okay to use fabricated parts or to add elements to the engine that came from the aftermarket and not the OEM.

Eventually, it was decided to have a show for both contingents, Reavie said.

“It’s interesting, they’re both car hobbyists, but they don’t always get along,” Reavie said. “We now have our antique show a week before the St. Ignace car

show. So this year, the ‘Antiques on the Bay’ show takes place on June 21 and 22.”

Reavie said one thing modifiers do is actually drive their vehicles to the show, making the show a fun family trip for many collectors.

“I will say this about modifiers,” Reavie said. “They are able to take cars found in barns and fix them up. They aren’t afraid to take two cars and weld the two best halves together. You can’t do that with an antique car and still have it keep its antique status.”

Over the years, attendance and the number of vehicles entered into the show have fluctuated based on the economy and other factors, Reavie said. He said he expects that about 900 vehicles will be entered into this year’s show. Attendance is calcu-

lated by comparing traffic over the Macinac Bridge.

“I know that’s not the most accurate way to calculate,” Reavie said. “But over the past few years, bridge traffic has been between 15,000 and 25,000 vehicles higher when compared to a non-show weekend.”

There should be between 275 and 300 vendors at the show, Reavie said. Many people attend just to see if they can find the special part that’s eluded them for years.

“Even with the Internet, there is the thrill of the chase and finding something you’ve been looking for at a show,” Reavie said.

Noted automotive historian “Top Hat” John Jendza said this year’s show will feature famed drag racer Al Bergler.

“Al builds race cars,” Jendza said. “He will be going to the

show with two vehicles – one is the dragster that won the first Ridler award, and he’s bringing his famous funny car, the Motown Shaker.”

Linda Vaughn, the first lady of motor sports, will also be at the show, Jendza said.

“There’s a lot of history with this show,” Jendza said. “She’s being brought in by Chevrolet.”

Craig Shantz, manager, GMPD Shows/Events and Product Promotion at General Motors Performance Division, said that GM respects the show and its history. This year, the company will be bringing up some concept cars, some show cars and some production vehicles for the public to view.

For more information on the show and what to do in St. Ignace, visit the web site www.nostalgia-prod.com.

1949 ‘High and Mighty’ Takes the Road to St. Ignace

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Suminski, in 2004, a group of CEMA members decided to build a tribute car to the original High and Mighty and purchased on eBay their own 1949 Plymouth business coupe to restore.

“Everyone helped, including many of the original Ramchargers team members. Some members still had some of the original parts from the first High and Mighty car, saved on the book shelves and garage cabinets at home,” Suminski said.

The process was exacting, but fun, Lees recalls, adding that one of the Ramchargers, Gary Schwartz, was able to provide two dozen pictures of the original car as it underwent construction.

And the club also owes many thanks, said Lees, to Dick Burke, who had a three-inch notebook of build details, and also put many hours into helping build the car.

“There was a lot of camaraderie and a feeling of togetherness, especially a feeling of relationship to the Ramchargers,” he said. “We did this as a tribute to the Ramchargers.

“We met on weekends and

worked together on it,” said Lees. “We now take it out to different car meets. People love to hear the noise of that engine, so we like to fire it up every hour or so. If we go to a meet where there’s a race track nearby, we do racing demonstrations.”

Sadly, the original High and Mighty is no more. Lees said after the Ramchargers raced it for two years, “it got outlawed because it was too successful” and the car was sent to a scrapyard, after which time it disappeared.

After their first car was outlawed, the Ramchargers would continue to come up with at least two new race cars a year based on the latest Chrysler products, “and this is the way they were advertising how well the new Chrysler products could do,” Lees said.

“And then, to increase exposure of Chrysler’s products, they

would have clinics to introduce other Chrysler car owners to what to do to make them faster, so there would be a lot of winning Chrysler products on the drag strips.

“Contrary to a lot of race car owners who keep their tune-up tips to themselves, these Chrysler guys shared their knowledge with other owners, which was good publicity for Chrysler,” he said. “There was a saying in the industry, ‘Win on Sunday, sell on Monday.’”

What to Do While at St. Ignace Show

Those traveling to the St. Ignace car show can do more than just look at classic automobiles.

On Wednesday, June 26, a special automotive art show and reception will be sponsored by Nostalgia Productions, local sponsor of the car show.

The reception will be held at the Mackinac Grille on the Boardwalk in St. Ignace from 6 to 8 p.m., giving show attendees the opportunity to mingle with their fellow car buffs in a relaxed atmosphere. Dress is casual.

On Thursday, June 27, a cruise will be held in the Kewadin Casino’s upper parking lot. The

lineup starts at 4 p.m. and trophies will be awarded after the cruise.

On Friday, June 28, a complementary buffet brunch will be held honoring world-renowned car customizer Gene Winfield starting at 10:30 a.m. in the Mackinac Grille Waterfront Tent.

The brunch will be followed later that afternoon by “The Down Memory Lane Parade,” which begins at the Mackinac County Airport at 7 p.m. The parade should last about 90 minutes.

The St. Ignace Car Show Swap Meet will be held on both Friday and Saturday of the event.

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