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GM's Cruise names interim CEO Kyle Vogt permanent chief

Cruise LLC, the autonomous vehicle company that is majority-owned by General Motors, on Monday named founder Kyle Vogt the full-time chief executive officer. Vogt had been interim CEO since Dan Ammann left Cruise in December following disagreements with GM Chair and CEO Mary Barra. At the time, GM said it would look for a permanent leader for Cruise. Vogt confirmed the appointment on his LinkedIn.com page. Vogt said he has "no doubt" Cruise will be "a difficult challenge given our very ambitious plans, but I couldn't imagine doing anything more important or more fun." He also said that putting people in driverless cars is a "lifelong dream for me. I will never give up." Putting Vogt atop Cruise could be a way to give the company's tech employees a sense that its mission to develop self-driving vehicles will remain intact despite more involvement from GM. Vogt founded the company before GM bought it in 2016 and has been a guiding force for its software development. *Source: Automotive News*

ACV acquires vehicle damage-detecting AI company for \$19M

Used-car online auction company ACV Auctions Inc. said Monday it completed a \$19 million acquisition of Monk SAS, an artificial intelligence solutions company that automates vehicle damage detection. The acquisition is ACV's latest step in building up its slate of digital products aimed at dealers and commercial partners. The AI option can help dealer customers scrutinize potential inventory, ACV said. Users of the software use a guided photo capture to take pictures of vehicle exteriors, which are then analyzed for damage, such as scratches and dents, according to an AI imaging demo video from Monk. Imaging AI will be offered as a standalone software-as-a-service option. It will also be integrated into ACV's other products: Drivably, a consumer-to-dealer vehicle marketplace it acquired last week, and Max Digital, which offers a vehicle inventory management platform and other products to dealers. Integrating Monk SAS software expands ACV's data services and widens the company's vehicle intelligence database, the company said. The AI-enabled self-inspection platform is already live with initial customers in Europe, ACV CEO George Chamoun said in a news release. *Source: Automotive News*

The Pronto Network's David Prater Transitions to Consulting Role

David Prater, executive vice president of The Pronto Network, will transition to a consulting role beginning March 7, it was announced today by Robert Roos, president, The Pronto Network. Prater has spent his 38-year career in the automotive aftermarket, joining the Automotive Distribution Network (then Parts Plus) in 1984. He was promoted to president in 2008 and served in that role until the merger with National Pronto Association in late 2020 that formed The Pronto Network. "Now that the merger is complete, I have made the decision to shift to a consulting role so that I have time to explore and enjoy other interests," said Prater. "I remain excited about The Pronto Network and believe merging the two groups was in the best interest of the membership. I look forward to seeing the members, along with our suppliers, at The Group's upcoming meeting and will continue to share my ideas to help The Pronto Network have a successful future." "Throughout the entire merger process, David has been a valued partner and was instrumental in ensuring a smooth transition for the entire membership," said Roos. "We are grateful that he has agreed to continue to share his knowledge and expertise with us as The Pronto Network grows and evolves." Prater will attend the Automotive Parts Services Group (The Group) annual membership meeting during the last week of April in Grapevine, Texas. Members, suppliers and associates of The Pronto Network and Federated Auto parts will meet in person for the first time since the formation of The Pronto Network. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Terry Dittes, head of UAW's GM department, to retire this summer

Terry Dittes, the General Motors-UAW vice president who led the union's bargaining with GM during a 40-day strike in 2019, plans to retire this summer. "The UAW has changed my life, and some of my greatest memories occurred while serving as UAW staff," he said in a letter to members viewed by Automotive News. Dittes, 63, plans to retire July 31 after the UAW Constitutional Convention. A replacement will be nominated at the convention. After that, the new vice president of the GM department will be elected by members, UAW spokesman Brian Rothenberg said. In December, UAW members voted for a direct-election system for union leaders, rather than the delegate system that many considered an enabler for corruption among the top ranks after a wide-ranging investigation sent two former presidents and 13 others to prison. A federal judge approved the members' vote in February and ordered the union to implement the new voting system by June 30. Dittes has been part of the UAW staff for 23 years. He became a UAW vice president in January 2018, replacing Norwood Jewell as head of the Fiat Chrysler Automobiles department. Jewell resigned because of his involvement in the corruption probe. He was sentenced to prison in 2019 for accepting bribes from FCA executives. Dittes was appointed vice president of the GM department in July 2018. The following year, the UAW selected GM as its target automaker for a new labor contract. The contract was ratified in late October after more than 46,000 U.S. hourly workers staged a 40-day-long walkout. Under the ratified contract, GM could close three underutilized plants, and workers received a record \$11,000 ratification bonus and as much as \$32 in hourly wages. GM also agreed to spend \$3 billion to retool Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly, now called Factory Zero, to build electric vehicles. Dittes began his career in 1978 with UAW Local 731 in Trenton, N.J., where he worked at the Fisher Body Plant. In 1980, he moved to GM Parts in Bensalem, Pa., and became shop chair for Local 2177 in 1992 for three consecutive terms, according to his bio. In 1999, he joined the UAW staff, with posts in Region 9 and the UAW Gaming Department through 2013. He was director of Region 9 from 2014 to 2018, when he became a vice president. The Detroit News reported Dittes' retirement on Tuesday. *Source: Automotive News*

GM taps Jeff Morrison as VP of global purchasing and supply chain





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General Motors has promoted Jeff Morrison to vice president of global purchasing and supply chain, a crucial role as the industry continues to manage the global microchip shortage and develop new supply chains for electric vehicles and EV batteries. Morrison, currently executive director of global electrification and battery engineering, has spent more than 15 years in purchasing, supply chain and logistics roles with GM. Morrison, 48, replaces Shilpan Amin, who will be promoted to president of GM International when Steve Kiefer retires April 1. In Morrison's current role, he is responsible for GM's global electrified hardware development, including EV propulsion calibration and driving performance, GM said in a statement Thursday. He has also led GM's global engineering and logistics organizations in the U.S. and Germany and has held executive roles in electrical systems and advanced technology, strategic planning, chassis systems and global logistics. "Jeff's extensive industry and leadership experience, especially in EV product development, procurement and support at the supplier level, positions him to continue the great progress we have made developing stronger relationships with the supplier community," Doug Parks, GM executive vice president of global product development, purchasing and supply chain, said in a statement. "This will be critical as we continue to build a strong, scalable and sustainable EV supply chain to support the acceleration of our upcoming EV launches." Before joining GM, Morrison was an engineering manager for powertrain supplier Federal-Mogul and an engineer for DaimlerChrysler, according to his LinkedIn profile. *Source: Automotive News*

Private equity firm Calera Capital buys F&I Sentinel

Private equity firm Calera Capital has purchased a majority stake in finance and insurance product compliance provider F&I Sentinel. F&I Sentinel did not disclose terms of the deal in a Monday news release announcing the acquisition. "We were not really looking for any investor," F&I Sentinel CEO and co-founder Stephen McDaniel told Automotive News on Tuesday. He said his company happened upon Calera, which focuses on founder-owned businesses that have scaled quickly. "We have grown very rapidly," said McDaniel, who launched F&I Sentinel in 2019 with fellow co-founders and insurance regulatory attorneys Matthew Nowels and Tim Meenan Jr. All three continue to be investors in the firm, McDaniel said. McDaniel and Nowels have continued in their roles of CEO and senior vice president of operations following the acquisition. Meenan has not been involved in the day-to-day operations of the company. "F&I Sentinel adds tremendous value to all members of the vehicle financing ecosystem," Calera Managing Director Brian Fearnow said in the news release. "We look forward to partnering with the management team to further enhance and extend the ways in which F&I Sentinel protects finance companies, dealers, and consumers." F&I Sentinel reviews F&I product terms to assure lenders they're not financing something that could prove problematic with regulators, according to McDaniel. "Automotive finance companies, banks and credit unions face complex compliance and risk mitigation challenges," Calera Senior Managing Director Paul Walsh said in the release. "F&I Sentinel represented a terrific opportunity to invest behind a market-leading business that provides unique technology and services to help financial institutions successfully navigate these issues." McDaniel said the company has reviewed 32,866 submissions from lenders since its inception. He said products change more than he had anticipated. "It's a living and breathing database," McDaniel said. McDaniel said F&I Sentinel appears poised for significant growth, and it plans to market itself more publicly than in the past. He said it also is becoming a software company and referenced the launch of FAIRRCalc, which stands for Finance and Insurance Refund Recovery Calculator. The tool helps finance companies determine guaranteed asset protection waiver refunds should the customer cancel before the end of the term. Building out a software development team is a company goal, McDaniel said. *Source: Automotive News*

AutoNation taps insiders as COOs to oversee different parts of business

AutoNation Inc. has named two company veterans as COOs to oversee both the franchised dealership and nonfranchised dealership sides of the auto retail giant's business. The moves come as its current president and COO is set to retire Friday. AutoNation said Thursday that Dave Koehler, its eastern region president since May 2019, will become COO of the nonfranchised dealership business and will manage the company's standalone used-vehicle AutoNation USA stores, AutoNation auctions and collision business. Steve Kwak, western region president since May 2017 and AutoNation USA president since August 2020, will be COO of the company's franchised dealership business, responsible for operations at new-vehicle dealerships, manufacturer relations, finance and insurance, and aftersales businesses. Koehler and Kwak will report to AutoNation CEO Mike Manley. "Steve and Dave have nearly sixty years of combined automotive experience and both have been with AutoNation for over ten years. They are exceptional leaders whose expertise will continue to support the trajectory and the strategy of AutoNation," Manley said in a statement. "With the significant investment, growth plans, and success of AutoNation USA coupled with our opportunity to develop our collision and auction business it is now time to ensure these operating units have the highest level of leadership and focus." Longtime AutoNation executive Jim Bender, COO since July 2019 and who added the president title in April 2020, is retiring Friday. The company announced his retirement plans in January. Last month, Manley announced an outside hire, former McKinsey & Co. executive Gianluca Camplone. Camplone was set to join AutoNation this week as executive vice president of business development, strategy, personal mobility and COO of Precision Parts. AutoNation uses the Precision Parts brand for items such as batteries and wiper blades. AutoNation said it would announce replacements for Koehler and Kwak "in the near future." *Source: Automotive News*

TuSimple Announces CEO and Chairman Succession Plan

Autonomous driving technology company TuSimple has announced its executive leadership succession plan. TuSimple Co-Founder and CTO Xiaodi Hou will succeed Cheng Lu as president and CEO and succeed Mo Chen as chairman of the board, effective today. According to TuSimple, this is part of a planned executive succession as the company moves to its next phase of commercializing L4 autonomous trucking technology. Lu will serve as an adviser to the CEO until March 2023 to further ensure an effective transition. "I'm incredibly proud of TuSimple's achievements. We've set many





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industry firsts, including becoming the first publicly traded autonomous driving company and first driver-out operations in trucking,” said Cheng Lu. “We have built a strong foundation with the necessary resources to fully commercialize. We have a clear vision, industry-leading technology, scalable commercial operations, world-class strategic partners, and a strong balance sheet. I’m excited for Xiaodi to transition to CEO and chairman and have the utmost confidence in our success as we move to our next phase of development.” “I would like to thank Cheng for his contributions in helping to build TuSimple. We have worked closely together to develop a clear roadmap to commercialization, and to scale our Autonomous Freight Network. Over the past several years, we have assembled a world-class management team to continue to build on our success and to ensure a smooth transition,” said Xiaodi Hou. “As chairman of the board, I’m proud to pass the torch to Xiaodi. In our first year as a public company, we have successfully achieved all of our key milestones. We have built a strong corporate infrastructure and governance model. With TuSimple having entered into the Driver-Out era, the path to commercialization is clear, and Xiaodi is the best person to lead us in executing on that roadmap,” said Mo Chen. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Former WABCO Exec Jon Morrison Joins the Plus Advisory Board

Plus, a global provider of self-driving truck technology, announced today the addition of Jon Morrison to its Advisory Board. Morrison brings deep expertise in developing, commercializing, and scaling innovative safety and efficiency technologies for commercial vehicles. Plus will draw on his global leadership experience to support the company’s global commercial deployment of its driver-in solution, PlusDrive, and the company’s continued development of autonomous trucking technology. “Jon’s unmatched expertise and track record of business and product leadership in the commercial vehicle industry is tremendously valuable as we look to scale the global deployment of our autonomous trucking technology. We are thrilled to have his support in our exciting growth journey,” said David Liu, CEO and co-founder at Plus. Jon Morrison said, “Plus has achieved remarkable success as the first autonomous trucking developer to launch a commercial autonomous driving product, already serving marquee fleets and OEMs today. I have been incredibly impressed with the team and its technology leadership and strategic approach. I look forward to working closely with David and the rest of the Plus team to bring its revolutionary autonomous trucking technology to more fleets and OEMs, all of whom will benefit from the improved safety, efficiency, and sustainability.” Prior to starting his current strategic advisory firm, Morrison served in a number of executive leadership positions over his 15 years at WABCO, a global provider of advanced electronic vehicle control, electrification, vehicle telematics and safety technologies for heavy-duty commercial vehicles. Most recently he was president of the Americas for WABCO from 2015 through its acquisition by ZF in 2020. Prior to that he was president and general manager of Meritor WABCO, a North American joint venture between WABCO and Meritor that markets and sells safety technology and efficiency components. Morrison also previously served as president for North America for American Axle & Manufacturing. Morrison holds a B.S. in General Management from Purdue University and an MBA from Bowling Green State University. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Jim Taylor Named CIO of Solve Industrial Motion Group

Solve Industrial Motion Group (“Solve”) is expanding its executive leadership team with the addition of Jim Taylor in the role of Chief Information Officer (CIO). Taylor comes to Solve with a track record of helping companies in growth mode implement transformative software solutions and business technology platforms that help progress their operations. “Bringing Jim on board is a huge win for us, our customers, distributors and supply chain partners,” said Lisa Mitchell, CEO of Solve. “With 25 years in leadership positions, he has the experience to help drive Solve’s enterprise evolution.” Taylor comes to Solve from Daseke, a specialized transportation and logistics company. As the CIO and a senior vice president, he was responsible for the management, governance and technical direction of the company. His role included oversight of transportation management systems, business intelligence, data centers, HR systems, cybersecurity and more. Prior to his time at Daseke, Taylor managed all technology support at Transportation Insight, a transportation logistics company. For nearly a decade, he contributed to the company’s growth. He’s also held IT roles with Ryder, DSV/ABX Logistics, DHL/Exel and Redwood Systems. Since Audax Private Equity acquired Solve in July 2021, the industrial bearings and power transmission components company has been strategically growing its product lines, services and staff. Taylor is the first of several new hires slated to join Solve’s executive leadership team. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Cindy Estrada, head of UAW's Stellantis department, to retire in December

Cindy Estrada, vice president of the UAW-Stellantis department, will retire at the end of this year after nearly three decades with the union. “The work is not done, but I believe the time has come for me to make space for the next generation of leaders of our great union,” Estrada, 53, said in a letter to members Monday. Estrada’s departure will follow the retirement of Terry Dittes, vice president of the UAW-General Motors department, in July. Dittes announced his retirement plans last week. Estrada was featured on Automotive News’ list of the 100 Leading Women in the North American Auto Industry in 2010 and 2015. The departures mean at least two of the Detroit 3 UAW vice presidents will be new to their roles when labor contract negotiations begin next year. Estrada and Dittes led bargaining for their respective companies during the 2019 labor contract negotiations that prompted a 40-day strike by GM’s hourly workers. Under a new direct-election voting system, UAW leaders will be nominated at the UAW Constitutional Convention in late July. Members will then vote for vice presidents of the Stellantis, GM and Ford departments. In December, UAW members voted for the direct-election system for union leaders, rather than the delegate system that many considered an enabler for corruption among the top ranks after a wide-ranging investigation sent two former union presidents and 13 others to prison. A federal judge approved the members’ vote in February and ordered the union to implement the new voting system by June 30. *Source: Automotive News*





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Mitsubishi promotes Mark Chaffin to North America CEO

Mitsubishi Motors North America is tapping brand veteran Mark Chaffin as CEO effective April 1, replacing Yoichi Yokozawa, who will return to Tokyo in a new management role. Chaffin, 53, has been COO of the Japanese automaker's North American operations since 2018. He previously held the posts of vice president of fixed operations, and director of parts operations, Mitsubishi Motors said in a statement Wednesday. Yokozawa has been North America CEO since March 2020. He replaced Fred Diaz, a former Nissan executive who spent two years as CEO of Mitsubishi Motors North America. Chaffin brings "a wealth of experience while at Mitsubishi Motors and other companies," said John Signoriello, executive officer of global marketing and sales for Mitsubishi Motors Corp. "His past assignments, and especially his tenure as chief operating officer for the company, makes him the perfect successor to lead MMNA." Chaffin joined Mitsubishi in 2007 after 13 years at Kia Motors America, including as senior manager of parts operations and systems. Among his recent accomplishments, Chaffin led the launch of the 2022 Outlander crossover, a completely redesigned model that has reenergized the brand in the North American market and set sales records, Mitsubishi Motors said. *Source: Automotive News*

BMW acquires Alpina performance brand

BMW Group is buying the brand rights of the Alpina high performance brand for an undisclosed sum. BMW said the acquisition will bring greater diversity to its lineup and also secure the long-term future of Alpina. BMW and Alpina, which is based in Buchloe, near Munich, have cooperated for 57 years. Alpina develops and sells high-performance versions of BMW cars and SUVs. The family-owned company employs about 300 people and produced about 2,000 cars last year. In addition to Germany and Europe, Alpina counts Japan, the U.S., and the Middle East among its most important markets. BMW said because of the transformation to electromobility and increasing legal requirements, the risks for small-series manufacturers are increasing. Acquiring Alpina will allow BMW to shape the long-term course of the brand as the industry goes through a far-reaching transformation toward sustainable mobility, BMW sales chief Pieter Nota said in a statement. Under the deal, BMW will manage the Alpina brand and refine vehicles. Alpina will continue to operate the maintenance and spare parts business for current and historic BMW Alpina cars. Alpina vehicles are pre-assembled on BMW production lines and final assembly takes place in workshops in Buchloe. Alpina's extensive modifications include tuning engines and transmissions, as well as tweaking the chassis, aerodynamics, and individual interiors to customer specifications. BMW said there would be no changes to existing aftersales operations, and there will be an expansion of existing development services for BMW out of Buchloe. "We recognized the challenges facing the automotive industry early on and are now setting the right course for Alpina and for our family firm, Bovensiepen," said Andreas Bovensiepen, co-managing director of Alpina Burkard Bovensiepen. "We made a conscious decision not to sell Alpina to just any manufacturer, because BMW and Alpina have worked together and trusted one another for decades," Bovensiepen said. Alpina said the deal will have "implications" for employees at the Buchloe site. By the end of 2025, BMW intends to offer some Alpina employees new jobs at BMW or help arrange new employment with partner or supplier companies. Alpina has been active in BMW tuning and motorsports from the 1960s onwards and began manufacturing passenger cars based on BMW products starting in 1978. *Source: Automotive News*

Tina Albright to Serve as 58th NTEA Board Chair

During Work Truck Week 2022, Tina Albright, vice president of HR & safety at Truck Bodies & Equipment International Inc. – TBEI, a subsidiary of Federal Signal Corporation, was installed as 58th Board chair of NTEA – The Association for the Work Truck Industry. She accepted the position from immediate past Board chair Jon Sievert, vice president – business development, for Douglas Dynamics (Milwaukee, Wisconsin). "I'm eager to begin this journey as NTEA Board chair and the first female to reside in the position," said Albright. "Throughout the next year, I plan to continue strengthening awareness of the programs, tools and services the Association offers to help member companies maneuver and succeed in today's ever-changing market." Albright's industry career began more than 27 years ago in office administration at Rugby Manufacturing Company (now TBEI). Throughout her career, she has held a broad range of positions spanning the organization, including inside sales and marketing, production management, supply chain, human resources and safety. In addition to serving on the Executive Committee, in recent years, she's been involved in the Chassis Liaison Committee, Education Committee, Workforce Development Task Force, Services Committee, and chaired the Board Development & Recruitment Committee and the Finance & Investment Committee.

- Also serving on the Board's Executive Committee are:
 - First Vice Chair David Scheitlin, General Manager, Auto Truck Group LLC (Roanoke, Indiana)
 - Second Vice Chair Jason Ritchey, President/Owner, Curry Supply Co. (Martinsburg, Pennsylvania)
 - Third Vice Chair and Treasurer Ben Winter, Director of Business Development, Transfer Flow Inc. (Chico, California)
 - Secretary Steve Carey, President & CEO, NTEA (Farmington Hills, Michigan)
- Distributor Directors
 - Rick Albertini, CEO, Phenix Truck Bodies & Van Equipment (Pomona, California)
 - Rod Hill, President, Utility Truck Equipment Inc. (Circleville, Ohio)
 - Mike Randolph, President – Work Truck and EV Solutions, Fontaine Modification Co. (Charlotte, North Carolina)
- Manufacturer Directors
 - TJ Blandford, CEO, Tommy Gate Co. (Woodbine, Iowa)
 - Pat Godwin Jr., Corporate President (The Godwin Group), Godwin Mfg. Co. Inc. (Dunn, North Carolina)





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- Joe Lewis, Vice President, ATW Truck Equipment (Kingston, Oklahoma)
- Todd Mouw, President, ROUSH CleanTech (Livonia, Michigan)
- Chris Weiss, Vice President of Engineering, The Knapheide Manufacturing Company (Quincy, Illinois)
- Associate Director
 - Joe Curran, National Fleet Sales Manager, Peterbilt Motors Company (Denton, Texas)

Source: *Aftermarket News*

Bosch Automotive Aftermarket Names New Regional President

Andreas Andorfer becomes Bosch Automotive Aftermarket Division's new Regional President on April 1. He succeeds Enrico Manuele, who will assume his new position as Executive Vice President with responsibility for global sales, as well as joining the division's board of management on April 1st. Beginning April 1, Andorfer will take over as the new regional president of Bosch Automotive Aftermarket Division in North America. Andorfer previously held the positions of regional president for Bosch Automotive Aftermarket Division in China and Asia Pacific-South, headquartered in Singapore. Andreas succeeds Manuele, who will join the Automotive Aftermarket Division's Board of Management in Karlsruhe, Germany, and will assume the role of executive vice president, with responsibility for Global Sales, effective April 1. Andorfer began his career in Bosch in 1998 and has held several senior leadership positions since. "I'm excited to see Andreas step into this role and I have an incredible trust in his ability to succeed and accomplish great things," said Manuele. "I look forward to his contributions which will continue driving regional growth and innovation through further enhancements of our quality products and services." Source: *Aftermarket News*

AirSept Announces New Hire for VP, Sales & Marketing

AirSept, a leader in developing innovative solutions for the repair industry and manufacturer of the award-winning Smart Splice line connectors, A/C and HVAC service tools and indoor air quality chemicals, announces the addition of Charles "Chuck" Abbott as the company's new vice president of sales & marketing. Hired March 1 by Aaron Becker, AirSept's president, Abbott's expertise is in transforming businesses for profitable growth in the tool, equipment and chemical categories via multiple channels to the automotive and HVAC/R service markets. Abbott previously served as vice president, global automotive sales for CPS Products, Inc. There, Abbott managed strategic accounts including Snap-on and Lockheed Martin and was the primary architect of a sales team that significantly grew sales with a focus on new, innovative products, leveraging private label programs, improving customer retention, and expanding distribution here and abroad. AirSept President Aaron Becker, says, "Rarely do you find a candidate whose professional background and thought processes are so closely aligned to your company's products and marketing needs. Chuck has a remarkable history of building brands for our specialized industry in addition to having long-standing excellent relationships with product managers with major automotive retailers, the mobility market, suppliers and manufacturer representatives. AirSept is poised for major growth with our inventory of over 20 award-winning professional service tools that saves time and money, which is especially relevant now with vehicles staying in service longer. I feel confident that Chuck, with his insight to our industry, his penchant for successful strategic planning, and new business development is the right person to capitalize on our strengths and develop a plan to catapult sales." Currently Abbott serves on the board of directors for the Automotive Maintenance & Repair Association and previously served on the board of directors for the Equipment Tool Institute. Abbott, a graduate of Lesley University, will have a hybrid work schedule working primarily from his home in Indianapolis. Source: *Aftermarket News*

EdgeEnergy Announces Director of Strategic Partnerships

EdgeEnergy has named Laura Boné as their new Director of Strategic relationships. With a decade of industry experience, Laura has supported the development of many early and late-stage electric vehicle and mobility companies in North America, Europe, and the UK. Amassing a wealth of hands-on knowledge in launching emerging technologies to market for all types of passenger and commercial electric vehicles, EV infrastructure and charging networks, TaaS and emerging future mobility startups. Laura's extensive experience in building new markets for electric mobility with companies like EV Connect and EVBOX makes her an ideal value-add consultant for EdgeEnergy's partners, including EV OEM's, EV charging companies, fleets, utilities, schools, energy companies and government agencies. Laura has many years of field-based market expertise in bringing electrified mobility technologies to rural and disadvantaged communities. This experience will accelerate EdgeEnergy's introduction to stakeholders, to resolve the many long-standing challenges of building DC Fast charging networks in rural regions and parks of North America and around the world. "I am thrilled to join the EdgeEnergy team," says Boné. "This technology is how we are going to deploy fast charging solutions at edge-of-grid locations across the U.S. and globally. Now we can deploy the infrastructure we need faster and at a lower cost and get the U.S. to our EV adoption goals." "We are excited to welcome Laura to our team," says Greg York, president and founder of EdgeEnergy. "This new position will allow us to continue to expand our relationships with partners and pursue new partnerships as part of our strategic growth strategy. Laura is fast becoming and integral part of our plans for growth in 2022." Source: *Aftermarket News*

Auto Care Association Adds Director of Membership Engagement

The Auto Care Association announced Todd Finnerty as its new director of membership engagement, where he will be responsible for providing leadership and strategic direction for Auto Care Association's member engagement and retention efforts by developing strong relationships with





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member companies in the automotive aftermarket industry, Auto Care says. In this role, Finnerty will leverage his experience as a former industry participant to more deeply connect and engage with members. Todd will lead a membership team dedicated to understanding member challenges, presenting solutions and fine-tuning the member experience to ensure seamless, end-to-end service, says Auto Care. Having served nearly six years with the association's membership department, Finnerty is already well-respected and connected with the entire supply chain: from manufacturers, to warehouse distributors, to retailers and shops, says Auto Care. He is also a former automotive technician for brands such as Ferrari and Mercedes-Benz. Finnerty holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Finance from American University's Kogod School of Business. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Rivian Hires Frank Klein as Chief Operations Officer

Rivian Automotive Inc. has announced the hiring of Frank Klein as chief operations officer, effective June 1, 2022. Klein most recently held the position of president at Austria-based automotive contract manufacturer Magna Steyr, a subsidiary of Canadian-based Magna International. He will be based in Normal, Illinois, and will report directly to Rivian's CEO, RJ Scaringe. Klein succeeds Rod Copes, who retired from the position last year. During his time at Magna Steyr, Klein oversaw the company's shift to the electric mobility manufacturing space, including the production of the first electric vehicle made by a contract manufacturer. Prior to working for Magna Steyr, Klein worked for Daimler AG for 27 years. Since 1996, he has held management positions in various business divisions such as Vehicle Research, Trucks, Cars, and Vans. Among other things, he was responsible for the setup of the Mercedes-Benz plant in Kecskemét, Hungary, where he took over the function of plant manager. He also served as head of Mercedes-Benz Vans Operations, with a global responsibility for the production network of Mercedes-Benz Vans, including Manufacturing Engineering, Supply Chain and Quality functions. Klein holds a master's degree in Electrical Engineering/Automation Technologies from Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University as well as a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from the FernUniversität (state distance-learning university) in Hagen. At Rivian, Klein will lead the build-out of robust and stable operations processes as well as scaling vehicle production across several new programs. He will reinforce Rivian's ongoing effort to achieve greater vertical integration in logistics, manufacturing and operations. "I'm hugely excited to be joining Rivian," said Klein. "It's a company creating industry-leading products and services that are helping to shape the future of the automotive industry. I share RJ's vision and I'm looking forward to working with him and the team to drive growth and further Rivian's mission." Rivian announced its plans to locate its second U.S. manufacturing facility in Georgia late last year, as well as its plans to scale capacity at its existing plant in Normal, Illinois. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Software tools provider Applied Intuition buys company behind CarSim

In a deal that underscores the ever-growing ties between Silicon Valley and Detroit, software tools provider Applied Intuition has acquired vehicle dynamics specialist Mechanical Simulation Corp. The transaction marries one of the best-known startups working on software tools for driver-assist and autonomous-driving systems with one known by automakers and suppliers for making highly accurate projections of real-world vehicle behavior. The companies announced the transaction Monday. Terms were not disclosed. Mechanical Simulation's flagship CarSim software is used by 7 of 10 of the largest automakers, according to the company. The Ann Arbor, Mich.-based company also makes products that support simulation for trucks, motorcycles and powertrains. Executives from Mountain View, Calif.-based Applied Intuition say it's a perfect complement for their own software and simulation tools, which accelerate development of driver-assist and autonomous-driving systems across the transportation, defense, agricultural and mining industries. Discussions about a prospective partnership began months ago. As they continued, Applied Intuition executives decided they wanted to instead pursue a full-fledged acquisition. "We admired their work," Applied Intuition CEO Qasar Younis tells Automotive News. "Nobody has vehicle dynamics at this level. What they've done, it's not something that a bunch of engineers could develop over months or even years." The acquisition gives Applied Intuition a footprint in the greater Detroit area, and adds approximately 30 employees to an existing team Younis said was in the low hundreds. Applied Intuition counts automakers such as Toyota, Daimler and General Motors among its customers, along with self-driving technology companies such as Torc Robotics and Motional. While today's driver-assist systems mostly offer braking, the next-generation systems will offer both braking and more evasive steering maneuvers when critical safety events occur. Applied Intuition Chief Technology Officer Peter Ludwig said the acquisition positions the company to further enhance its expertise in helping developers control vehicle performance in those edge-case scenarios, as well as in electric powertrain simulation and verification. "This is really a watershed moment for Applied," he said. "These guys bring a lot of value. They have extremely accurate measurements. They've literally written the book on vehicle dynamics." That's no hyperbole. Tom Gillespie, one of Mechanical Simulation's co-founders, wrote the book *Fundamentals of Vehicle Dynamics*, published by SAE. He founded the company in 1996 along with Mike Sayers, spinning the technology out of work the two conducted at the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute. Younis and Ludwig, who co-founded Applied Intuition in 2017, both have Michigan ties. Younis grew up in the Detroit area and worked for GM before leaving for Bosch. He later became a partner and then COO at Y Combinator. Ludwig graduated from the University of Michigan, then worked at Nvidia, Microsoft and Google before co-founding Applied Intuition. In November, the company raised \$175 million in its series D funding round, which valued Applied Intuition at \$3.6 billion. The company counts former GM CEO Rick Wagoner and former chairman of Daimler AG Dieter Zetsche as members of its advisory board. *Source: Automotive News*

SEMA Names New Vice President of Marketing





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The Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA) has announced RJ de Vera as its new vice president of marketing. De Vera comes to SEMA after 12 years at 3M, a Fortune 100 company, including the past seven as global leader of digital marketing and public relations for the Meguiar's Car Care brand. In his new role, he will be developing and implementing a modernized multi-channel marketing strategy for SEMA with a digital-first focus to expand brand awareness and build customer affinity for SEMA and its members. "RJ is an industry icon, having worked in and with the aftermarket specialty business for nearly 30 years. It's a thrill to have him join the SEMA leadership team," said SEMA Senior VP of Operations Bill Miller. "He will surely be an asset to our growth in the coming years, and we look forward to seeing what he will bring to the organization." Prior to 3M/Meguiar's, de Vera worked with OEMs including Honda, Lexus, Mitsubishi, Mazda, and Scion to build corporate image vehicles. He also helped American Racing, Veilside Japan, and Vorsteiner design and market aftermarket parts and accessories, while also consulting on automotive-related marketing initiatives with numerous brands, including Pepsi Co., Valvoline, Boost Mobile, Michelin/BF Goodrich, and Microsoft/XBOX. "I have attended every SEMA show since 1997 and have had the honor of being a judge for the SEMA Show's Battle of Builders series for the past six years," said de Vera. "I am honored to expand my role within the association and hope to have a positive impact on the industry and culture that I love." Early in his career, he was part of the team at Petersen Publishing that led the charge to popularize sport compact culture with Super Street Magazine. In addition, de Vera helped promote the first National Import Racing Association (NIRA) events and assisted Universal Studios in launching "The Fast and the Furious" movie franchise as a consultant and actor. He also served as a judge, host, and content strategist for MTV's "Trick It Out" series. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Advance Auto Parts Appoints Experienced Finance Executive to Its Board

Advance Auto Parts has announced Joan Hilson, Signet Jewelers' chief financial and strategy officer, has been appointed to its board of directors, effective March 15. Hilson has more than 35 years of finance experience, primarily in the retail industry. She joined Signet in 2019 and is currently the chief financial and strategy officer. Hilson is a transformative leader delivering on Signet's Inspiring Brilliance strategy that is intended to drive profitable growth through innovation, capital management, real estate optimization and expansion of market share. Previously, Hilson served as CFO of David's Bridal from 2014-2019. Prior to 2014, she served in a variety of finance roles of increasing responsibility, including CFO, with American Eagle Outfitters Inc. from 2005-2012, and Limited Brands Inc. from 1993-2005 where she served as CFO, Victoria's Secret Stores division. Hilson began her career with the accounting firm of Coopers & Lybrand. "We are pleased to welcome Joan to our diverse and talented Advance Auto Parts Board of Directors," said Eugene I. Lee, Jr., chair of the Advance Board of Directors. "As we continue to focus on transforming and growing our business to meet the evolving needs of our customers, Joan's deep finance and retail experience will be invaluable. I look forward to working closely with her as we continue to execute our strategy and drive shareholder value." *Source: Aftermarket News*

CarParts.com Announces Two Executive Appointments

E-commerce provider of automotive parts and accessories CarParts.com announced effective April 18, 2022, COO & CFO, David Meniane will transition to CEO and SVP of Finance, and Ryan Lockwood will become CFO. These moves follow Lev Peker's decision to step down as Chief Executive Officer and director, effective as of close of business on April 15, 2022, to pursue other business opportunities. The company has also appointed Meniane as a Class III director to fill the resulting vacancy from Peker's departure from the Board. "CarParts.com has undergone an aggressive turnaround journey, resulting in growth across the business as well as an improved customer experience," said David Meniane, current COO & CFO and incoming CEO. "I am proud to be assuming the role of CEO at this exciting time and, with Ryan and the team at CarParts.com, will remain focused on business execution, serving our customers and taking CarParts.com to the next level." Through this shift in leadership, the mission of CarParts.com remains the same. Guided by a strategy of Right Part, Right Time, Right Place, CarParts.com says it has experienced its most successful year to date in 2021, recently announcing its latest quarterly and annual earnings earlier this month. "Since joining CarParts.com in 2019, David has been an integral part of the Company's transformation and he intimately knows the business, having built, among many other things, a vertically integrated supply chain and the Company's data science team. What's more, he helped us navigate a global pandemic, both from a staff and operations perspective," said Lev Peker, outgoing CEO. "2021 was a year of challenges for many but together we have established a solid foundation that will allow the organization to navigate the future. Alongside David, Ryan will continue to drive the business forward through financial discipline and market strategy. His knowledge of the financial industry is critical to ensuring CarParts.com's continued success." "After experiencing our eighth consecutive quarter of year-over-year sales growth, I believe in our ability to execute on our long-term growth strategy and disrupt a \$300B industry," said Lockwood. "I'm excited about where the Company is headed and I'm grateful to have the opportunity to work alongside an incredible leadership team as we serve our valued customers, partners, and community." Incoming CEO David Meniane added, "I would like to personally thank Lev for his leadership, dedication and commitment to CarParts.com, and wish him tremendous luck in his future endeavors." *Source: Aftermarket News*

ZF CEO Scheider to step down in early 2023 from world's third-largest supplier

ZF Friedrichshafen CEO Wolf-Henning Scheider, who took the helm of the supplier amid a boardroom clash over strategy, will step down at the start of 2023. Scheider, 60, had asked that his contract not be renewed, the company said in a statement Thursday. He joined ZF in 2018 from Mahle, where he was CEO; before that Scheider spent nearly three decades at Robert Bosch in various management positions. "After more than three decades in the automotive industry and reaching the age of 60, he had decided to end his active time in the industry at the end of the year, to pursue other challenges," the supplier said. Scheider succeeded Stefan Sommer at ZF, an unlisted company that is controlled by the Zeppelin Foundation, which holds 94 percent of shares and is administered by the city of Friedrichshafen, in southern Germany. Sommer left ZF at the end of 2017 amid





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boardroom disagreements over the supplier's expansion strategy. Sommer had been the architect of a multiyear repositioning of ZF, seeking to convert the company from a supplier of transmissions, gears, axles and steering systems to a leader in future autonomous vehicle technologies. That strategy had entailed billions in acquisitions, most prominently the \$12.4 billion purchase of U.S. electronics supplier TRW Automotive in 2015. The TRW deal led to the creation of the second-largest global automotive supplier. ZF's main businesses are electronics and ADAS, chassis control, components for electrification, active and passive safety, and commercial vehicle systems. It ranks third on the Automotive News list of the top 100 global suppliers, with worldwide sales to automakers of \$33.4 billion in 2020. Under Scheider, ZF continued to expand, most notably with the 2019 acquisition of Wabco for \$7 billion to bolster its expertise in trucks and driver-assistance systems. Scheider also faced an array of industry crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the global semiconductor shortage, and now the effects of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Andreas Brand of the Zeppelin Foundation praised Scheider in a statement, saying, "The fact that ZF is back on track, after the past two years of crisis, is also due to Wolf-Henning Scheider's work. We regret his personal decision, but also respect it." On Thursday, Scheider said he was proud that ZF had achieved profitable growth as a team during his tenure, and was able to offer automakers complete systems rather than only individual components. "We've developed into a one-stop shop from a component supplier," he told journalists at ZF's annual news and results conference. "The OEMs know they can get overall solutions from us." ZF said it recorded 2021 sales of 38.2 billion euros (\$42.2 billion) in 2021, a 18 percent increase over 2020. Adjusted earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) were 1.91 billion euros compared with 1.05 billion in 2020. Adjusted EBIT margin was 5 percent, compared with 3.2 percent in 2020. *Source: Automotive News*

Wells Vehicle Electronics Announces New President & COO

Wells Vehicle Electronics has begun its 119th year in business with a leadership change that is set to further propel the company into the future. The company's board of directors has appointed Patrick Sommerfeld as president and chief operating officer (COO). Since joining Wells in 2007 in the product management team, Sommerfeld has taken on leadership roles with increasing responsibility, most recently serving as the senior vice president of sales and marketing. In that role, he oversaw product, pricing, sales, marketing, content, customer service, technical service, and category management. Prior to Wells, Sommerfeld held various positions at Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., based in Akron, Ohio. Sommerfeld will be replacing Yoshi Ieda, who will become Wells Vehicle Electronics' CEO. Ieda, who has served as the president and COO of Wells since NGK Spark Plug Co. LTD appointed him to the role in 2019, was pleased to announce the promotion. As a passionate and personable leader, Ieda has focused on making personal connections with associates throughout the organization and plans to be heavily involved in employee engagement initiatives moving forward. "Under Pat's continued leadership, Wells will progress with the same strategy the company has been working toward the past three years," said Ieda. "I am honored to follow behind such a great leader like Yoshi," said Sommerfeld. "He is a true inspiration for all Wells associates. Like Yoshi, I will be highly engaged with our great associates throughout all of our locations in Wisconsin, Iowa, Texas, Mexico, China, and our other global sites. "My focus will continue to be on our great associates and customers," added Sommerfeld. "These two groups have built a company that has allowed thousands of associates to foster lifelong careers and provide for their families. Wells has been delivering great products for nearly 120 years to a wide range of OE and Aftermarket customers, including Ford, General Motors, Harley-Davidson, Mercury Marine, CARQUEST, Advance Auto Parts, AutoZone, O'Reilly Auto Parts, as well as independent warehouse distributors. Wells will continue to focus on our core customer base while we expand our business through our Aftermarket Group and Wells Engineered Products Group, which services our OEM and specialty customers. "Our Advanced Business Development Team is driving the development of new products and services to ensure the sustainability of Wells," Sommerfeld continued. "Our patented Rotary Position Sensor technology, which came from this innovative team, is a great example of the products and services we are bringing forward as the transportation industry evolves from internal combustion engines to a higher percentage of electric vehicles." *Source: Aftermarket News*

Akebono Adds Carl Tellier To Aftermarket Sales Team

Akebono Brake Corp. has announced the addition of Carl Tellier to its aftermarket sales team. Tellier will fill the role of Eastern Regional Sales Manager, reporting to Mike Eldard, National Sales Manager. Tellier has an impressive 33 years of automotive aftermarket experience. He has held key sales positions with Tenneco Automotive/Driv, with his most recent position at MAT Holdings Inc. as director of sales. Tellier attended St. John Fisher College, where he earned his Bachelor of Business Management and Marketing Degree. He will be based out of his home office in South Carolina. "Carl has an impressive background in sales and automotive and we are looking forward to him working closely with our professional installers, fleets, municipalities, jobber stores and distributors," said Mike Eldard. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Collin Shaw Named President, COO of HDMA

Collin Shaw has been named president and chief operating officer of the Heavy Duty Manufacturers Association (HDMA), the commercial vehicle supplier division of the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA). The announcement was made by MEMA President & CEO Bill Long. Shaw, who will take the helm at HDMA effective today, brings 15 years of experience in the mobility industry from the automotive and commercial vehicle sectors. He has worked for global companies and brands, with roles in marketing, communications, strategy, digital solutions, and business development. At FCA (now Stellantis), Shaw served as global brand manager for Jeep and served in Chrysler's Leadership Development Program. While at WABCO, he partnered with heavy-duty OEMs to develop advanced technology roadmaps. Most recently, Shaw was responsible for North American business strategy at ZF Group. "Over the next 10 years, new technologies that address electrification, autonomy and the internet of things





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will transform the heavy-duty mobility industry," said MEMA president & CEO Bill Long. "Finding a person with a diverse background across multiple sectors in mobility was a key goal in our candidate search. With his unique perspective and skillset, coupled with an already high-performing team at HDMA, Collin will support our supplier members, move the industry forward, and keep HDMA at the forefront of policy decisions." "The suppliers and manufacturers within the heavy-duty vehicle industry are the backbone of innovation and technology, transforming how goods, people and services are transported," said Shaw. "Now, more than ever, vehicle suppliers need a powerful voice in Washington and a platform for industry dialogue and change. In the wake of worker shortages, inflation, and the transformation in technologies to achieve zero emissions, I am committed to working with the HDMA Board of Directors and staff to build on the strong tradition of our association." *Source: Aftermarket News*

Ford moves top HR exec into new Ford Blue role, makes other leadership hires

Ford Motor Co., seeking to fill the leadership team of its newly created Ford Blue division, said Kiersten Robinson, its top human resources executive, would become general manager of Ford Blue's family vehicles as well as president of Ford's operations in Mexico and Canada. Robinson will report to Kumar Galhotra, president of Ford Blue, and the move will formally take effect in mid-May, the automaker said Monday. "Kiersten is a transformational leader who has been instrumental in supporting Ford's business and global team for nearly three decades through innovative people, talent, employee safety and workplace experience solutions," CEO Jim Farley said in a statement. "Now she's taking on a critical global operating role within Ford Blue as president of Mexico and Canada, as well as leading our Family Vehicles product line that includes the popular Ford Explorer, Expedition and Everest." Robinson joined the company in 1995 and has held a number of roles. She has been Ford's chief people and employee experiences officer since 2020, and she played a key role in shaping the automaker's remote work plans amid the coronavirus pandemic. Ford also announced Monday it has hired Jennifer Waldo from Apple to replace Robinson as chief people and employee experiences officer, effective in mid-May. She will report to Farley. Waldo has been Apple's vice president of People Business Partners since 2019, in charge of the team supporting all nonretail people-related functions, including software, hardware, services, design and marketing, as well as the global mobility and talent development teams, Ford said in the statement. "Jen has incredible experience and a track record of helping companies across different industries build talent and culture to support innovation and growth," Farley said in a statement. "She will be an invaluable addition as we build a diverse, high-performance team to deliver the Ford+ plan." Ford also said Christopher Smith, a former assistant secretary at the U.S. Department of Energy in the Obama administration, would become the automaker's chief government affairs officer effective April 4. He'll replace Mitch Bainwol, who retired at the end of 2021. Smith will report to Steven Croley, Ford's chief policy officer and general counsel. "Chris has devoted his career to shaping progressive energy policy and driving toward a more sustainable future," Croley said in a statement. "He brings tremendous passion and expertise to Ford as we shape the future of transportation." Smith most recently was senior vice president, policy, government and public affairs at liquefied natural gas operator Cheniere Energy. During the Obama administration, he was assistant secretary for fossil energy, a role in which he oversaw policy, international engagement and R&D programs, Ford says. He also has held managerial and analytical positions at Chevron. *Source: Automotive News*

GSP Announces New Director of Spartanburg Operations

GSP North America announced Albert Abrams as its Director of Spartanburg Operations. In his new role, Albert will oversee the Spartanburg, SC, distribution operations, inventory management and customer service. Prior to joining GSP, Albert has extensive distribution and automotive experience with Sundland Logistics and Advance Auto Parts, GSP says. Overall, he has spent 20+ years in distribution and warehousing. Albert attended Greenville Technical College and is ISO 9000 certified. "GSP NA continues to grow at an accelerated pace driving the need for experienced, aftermarket professionals. We are excited to welcome Albert to the team and look forward to his contributions to our shared success," said Michael Ceritano, COO. "I am extremely excited to join GSP NA in this role. The growth trajectory for GSP NA has been tremendous and will continue in 2022," explained Abrams. "My leadership style, experience and skill set are aligned with the GSP business model. I am looking forward to our shared growth." *Source: Aftermarket News*

Grote Names New Executive Director for US Engineering

Grote Industries has promoted Chief Engineer Chuck O'Neal to executive director to lead and manage the company's U.S. Engineering organization. "Grote Industries is fortunate to have an engineer and leader with the broad range of experience O'Neal has acquired over his 35 years working for Grote," said Dominic Grote, CEO and president of Grote Industries. "Chuck knows our products, their applications and our customers better than virtually anyone else." O'Neal started his career at Grote Industries in 1987 as a design draftsman working on the newly launched UBS wire harness product line. Over the years, O'Neal has served in an engineering design and development capacity for nearly every product line Grote Industries offers, helping to launch many staple lighting products for the heavy-duty industry. In addition to designing and launching new products, O'Neal is also known for tackling challenging projects, especially those associated with meaningful cost reductions. In 1999, O'Neal's responsibilities began to include development management and oversight for a team of engineers. His leadership roles have subsequently included group leader, engineering manager, manager of current products, and most recently, chief engineer. He is known to take new engineers under his wing, aiding their development into engineering professionals. In addition to his role as a mentor and leader, Dominic Grote noted, "Chuck's strong work ethic, commitment to completing tasks, and dedication to Grote's core values of trust, integrity, responsibility and respect have made him a trusted leader





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at Grote Industries. Under O'Neal's leadership as the new executive director for U.S. Engineering, the future of Grote Industries looks bright." *Source: Aftermarket News*

CREF Introduces 2022 Executive Committee

The Collision Repair Education Foundation (CREF) is excited to announce and introduce its newly appointed Executive Committee. CREF's 2022 Executive Committee includes:

- Chair Steve Schmidt (State Farm)
- Vice Chair Kevin Burnett (Gerber Collision & Glass)
- Secretary Doug Irish (Fayetteville Technical Community College)
- Treasurer Ryan West (GEICO)
- Trustee-at-Large Don Mikrut (Wejo)
- Trustee-at-Large Brenda Hogen (Parts Trader)
- Immediate Past Chair Tom Wolf (PPG Industries)

"The CREF Board of Trustees encompasses a fantastic cross-section of the industry," says Schmidt. "Each participant is eager to work toward CREF's vision and goals, and they are open to sharing their wealth of knowledge to bolster CREF's success. I enjoy listening to their thoughts and learning from each of them during every BOT meeting. It's great group – I am honored to work with them on the Board!" Schmidt entered the collision repair industry "as a high school kid at a dealership body shop and never really left the industry. While I ultimately went to work with an insurer after six years in collision, I still stayed attached as an I-CAR instructor for 31 years, holding classes in 18 different states and enjoying the opportunity to get to know so many great repair facilities and technicians. Now, my goal is to help young individuals get their start and continue their development to be a far better and more successful tech than I was or ever could have been!" "I look forward to continuing my work with the Board and the Executive Committee, helping to ensure the industry is able to attract and retain enough qualified technicians," Burnett states. "I like the fact that the Board is made up of people from all sides of the industry which enables good, lively discussion." After spending the first 10-plus years of his career in information technology, Burnett switched roles when "Gerber had a need to fill a general manager position in their largest store. I took on the challenge, and with the help of a great mentor, Neal Gerber, I was able to learn the business – starting in a production role, moving to GM and up from there. I've enjoyed my almost five years on the board and look forward to continuing on the Executive Committee." "This is my first stint on the Executive Committee, and I am looking forward to having a great impact on the discussion for where CREF is heading," Irish shares. "I have served as a Trustee for a few years now and enjoy participating in the meetings and collaborating with other trustees to map out the goals and objectives for CREF. Serving on the Executive Committee will provide a voice directly from the education field on how CREF can best serve the needs of the education community." Irish began working in a friend's family body shop when he was just 15 years old, attending a high school collision repair program during his junior and senior years and returning to the industry after serving three years in the military. "I worked as a technician and manager in multiple shops and dealerships for 15 years until jumping the fence to the insurance side of the industry," he recalls. "I spent 20 years with an insurance carrier working my way up from appraiser to management before retiring in 2012. I then began a quality assurance company working with collision repair shops to identify quality issues during the work in process, so the shops could correct the deficiencies before they became a safety or legal concern. "In 2017, I was contacted by Fayetteville Technical Community College and asked if I was interested in managing the new Collision Repair & Refinish Technology program that was started with a major contribution from CREF and industry stakeholders," Irish continues. "I have enjoyed the challenges of recruiting, managing the program and teaching classes for the past 5 years. I am confident we will remain a major provider of talent for years to come." West is "happy to help as much as I can when it comes to supporting a mission as important as ours. I have found this Board and its past members were all in it for the right reasons, which is encouraging. "I am one of the few members of our industry who has spent their entire 30-year career with the same company," West continues. "I am very thankful that my company, GEICO, supports important efforts like CREF and that they support my work with our Board." "Being involved with CREF's Board is important for multiple reasons," Mikrut explains. "The most important reason is that it's a great opportunity to give back to the industry that we love by cultivating and identifying ways to support the industry, and one of the most beneficial ways we can do that is by making sure that schools and students have the necessary equipment to learn our industry." Like many other industry professionals, Mikrut found his collision industry career inadvertently. "While I was going to college for marketing, a classmate's parents who owned a collision business approached me to represent their business to the insurance companies and agents – and they wouldn't take 'no' for an answer. They sort of yanked me in... I wasn't looking for this industry, but once I got into it, I fell in love with collision and just never left it." "I'm new on the Executive Committee and joined because I really enjoy helping students realize their goals; it's very rewarding," Hogen contributes. "I also enjoy being part of a larger initiative to resolve issues within our industry, particularly related to the technician/labor crisis. I'm grateful to have the opportunity to pay it forward." Hogen also shares a fun fact about her industry career: "I've been fortunate enough to have a career has taken me to all 50 states. I can't say I like one over the others... I like them all!" In addition to the Executive Committee, the Foundation Board of Trustees consists of:

- Stacy Bartnik (Intertek)
- Mike Croker (Chief Automotive)
- Paul Folino (LKQ Corporation)





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- Ty Gammill (Caliber Collision Centers)
- Andreas Hecht (CCC Intelligent Solutions)
- Mark Helvenston (Insurance Auto Auctions)
- Ken Hudson (Farmers Insurance)
- Sean Huurman (Service King Collision Repair)
- Scott Kohl (Kemper Insurance)
- Josh Krentz (Forbes Road Career and Technology Center)
- Sandee Lindorfer (Allstate Insurance Company)
- Mary Mahoney (Enterprise Holdings)
- Jay Sharp (National Coatings & Supplies)
- Jeanne Silver (retired)

As a brand-new addition to CREF's Board, Krentz is excited to contribute his experience and insights. While attending Forbes, he worked at a local dealership body shop as an entry-level apprentice, and after graduating high school, he attended UTI in Texas, working in various body shops and a restoration shop before branching out to try fabrication and welding for three years. In search for a job that offered advancement opportunities, he moved to parts, progressing to parts manager for six months while beginning to teach some adult night programs. "I always wanted to get into teaching, and when my former high school instructor decided to retire, he let me know so I could apply for the position. I spent six months teaching auto mechanics at another school before assuming the Forbes position when he retired," Krentz recalls. "I also complete contract work for VeriFacts, an OEC company, performing independent OEM collision repair program inspections. All of my experience relates to auto body, and my background in multiple aspects, especially education, will benefit my role on CREF's Board." As CREF's 2019 Instructor of the Year, Krentz believes "Education is the biggest thing, and that's my strength. The Board has people from different aspects of the industry who contribute their thoughts as we try to determine how to best support CREF, and I feel it's vital to have voices that represent the education side because industry members who don't spend time in the classroom can't know what's going through our doors every day. We have to focus on getting the right kids in the classroom, rather than merely filling seats. If we have the right people, we'll be able to fill the void in the industry as it relates to job openings." Trustee Emeriti include J. Laurence "Larry" Costin (CCC Information Services, Inc.), Lrel G. Holt (U, Inc.) and Chuck Sulkala. *Source: Aftermarket News*

XL Fleet Announces Leadership Change

XL Fleet Corp., a provider of fleet electrification solutions, announced today that Tod Hynes has been appointed chair of its board of advisors, and has stepped down as president of XL Fleet and member of its board of directors to work with additional organizations reducing fossil fuel consumption and combating climate change. This change took effect on March 21. "We appreciate Tod's commitment and many contributions to XL Fleet over the years," said Eric Tech, CEO of XL Fleet. "XL Fleet's platform is built on Tod's sustainability-focused mission founded over 13 years ago. We look forward to building upon the vision he established as we pursue new opportunities to address the growing and evolving demand for decarbonization. On behalf of the board and management, we wish Tod continued success in his future endeavors and look forward to his contribution to the Board of Advisors." "It has been a pleasure and an honor to build XL Fleet from its foundation, as a fleet electrification pioneer," said Hynes. "I look forward to seeing XL Fleet continue to innovate and deliver value to its stakeholders under this experienced leadership team." *Source: Aftermarket News*

Mighty Auto Parts Announces New Hires To Support Growth

Mighty Auto Parts recently announced three new hires to support its continued growth servicing the automotive aftermarket. Mighty's newest team members, Sunny Muehlberger, Elvia Vega and Kyle Brown, further strengthen the company's service offerings. The recent hires, employed for their diverse talents and skills, will work at Mighty's home office in Peachtree Corners, Georgia. "We're very excited to welcome Sunny, Elvia and Kyle to the Mighty team," said Josh D'Agostino, president and CEO. "Each of our new hires brings innovative ideas, great experience and a fresh original approach to their respective roles. I'm looking forward to their contributions as we continue to grow the Mighty System." Sunny Muehlberger joins Mighty as a senior product manager. She brings more than 22 years of experience in automotive aftermarket with Genuine Parts Co. While at GPC, Muehlberger held responsibilities in IT with barcode quality assurance, sales as a district manager, managing commercial markets in operations, and product management. Her extensive product management experience includes managing NAPA's filter program, batteries, electrical, heavy-duty lines and the Dorman program. At Mighty, Muehlberger will have product responsibility for filtration, batteries and wiper blades. Elvia Vega joins the marketing department as a marketing coordinator. She has more than five years of marketing experience in industries ranging from med spas to finance. In her role, Vega will be responsible for overseeing the strategic digital initiatives and representing the Mighty brand across various social media channels. Vega currently is pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Georgia. Kyle Brown joins the marketing team as a marketing specialist. In his role, he also supports all strategic digital initiatives as well as in-house video production. Brown currently is a senior at Georgia State University, pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in Film & Media. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Stan Padover Announces New Regional Sales Manager





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Stan Padover Associates Inc., a leading manufacturers' representative agency, has announced that Jeff Macmillan has joined the firm as regional sales manager. Macmillan has more than 20 years of aftermarket experience, most recently as a district sales manager for NGK and Wells Vehicle Electronics. Previously, he also worked as an independent sales agent in the Arizona and New Mexico markets. Additionally, Macmillan worked in the tech sector as a production and manufacturing supervisor for Intel. Macmillan will be based in the Allentown, Pennsylvania, area and service not only Padover customers in the northeast but assist the company's sales and service efforts nationwide. He currently holds ASE Certification. "We are very excited to welcome Jeff to our team. He brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to our staff as we continue to build out our nationwide network of service personnel to support our customers at the installer level. Jeff has a long track record of pull-through selling and creating brand awareness to our factories' ultimate customer, the professional installer," says Michael Padover, president of the company. Founded in 1980, Stan Padover Associates represents leading aftermarket and OEM manufacturers to the traditional, retail and import vehicle community sectors. Based in New York, the firm also maintains offices in California, Florida and Puerto Rico to service and support their local and national account customers.

Source: *Aftermarket News*

GM creates new commercial growth strategies, operations division

General Motors is creating a commercial growth strategies and operations organization to oversee the automaker's cross-brand retail and fleet sales, electric vehicle operations and commercialization of future business opportunities. Steve Hill, 60, who has been vice president of global Chevrolet since 2019, will lead the new organization, GM said in a statement Monday. The GM Fleet, U.S. sales operations and EV retail innovation teams will report to Hill. "The Commercial Growth Strategies and Operations organization is well positioned with this leadership team to drive continued growth and profitability for our dealers and GM, while stewarding our transition to an all-electric future," Steve Carlisle, president of GM North America, said in the statement. Scott Bell, 55, currently president of GM Canada, will replace Hill as global vice president of Chevy. Marissa West, 40, executive chief engineer of global midsize truck and medium-duty truck and van, will become president of GM Canada. All leadership changes are effective April 1.

Source: *Automotive News*

Patti Engineering Hires New Business Development Manager

Patti Engineering, a control system integration company based in Auburn Hills, MI with offices in Texas and Indiana, has announced the hire of Jeff Johnston as New Business Development Manager. Johnston will work directly with current and potential customers to understand integration needs and offer solutions that maximize return on investment for customers. "Jeff brings a lot of integrity to our team," said Sam Hoff, CEO of Patti Engineering. "His many years of experience will complement our team's expertise and allow us to better serve our growing base of customers." Jeff Johnston comes to Patti Engineering with over sixteen years of experience as a Senior Sales Engineer at Keyence. He has built his career on solving problems and increasing efficiency in manufacturing environments. A graduate of Purdue University, Johnston holds a Bachelor of Arts in psychology.

Source: *Aftermarket News*

CAWA Announces Newly Appointed Board of Directors

Jeffrey Groves of O'Reilly Automotive Inc. and Nathan Fidler of Worldpac have been appointed to CAWA's board of directors. During the appointment process, Michael Rukov of RepWorks Marketing, chair of the Board of Directors, commented: "We are pleased to have these two member company representatives join our Board of Directors to participate in our discussions of current and future industry issues". "We welcome them and look forward to their participation and contributions which will assist CAWA in achieving its goals as an effective automotive aftermarket industry organization", continued Rukov. Jeffrey Groves is the senior vice president of legal and risk management for O'Reilly Automotive, Inc. and has been with the Company since 2004. His primary responsibilities as the company's general counsel include oversight of the corporate legal function including inside and outside counsel, risk management and internal audit. Prior to O'Reilly, Mr. Groves was in private law practice in Springfield and Kansas City, Missouri. He is a graduate of the University of Missouri with degrees in education and law. He has served on boards in the past, including the Jordan Valley Community Health Center and for the City Utilities of Springfield. Nathan Fidler is a Regional Director of Sales for Worldpac. He has been in the automotive industry for 16 years in various roles. During his tenure with Worldpac, he has helped the Company grow market share, exceed Company objectives, and develop a top tier team. Mr. Fidler is an experienced strategist and business leader with a proven track record of exceptional customer relationship management, customer technology adoption plans, assessment/development, and delivery execution. He is a graduate with a Bachelors from Cleary University, where he majored in executive management. Source: *Aftermarket News*

Lori Flees Named President of Valvoline's Retail Services Segment

Valvoline Inc. has named Lori Flees president of its Retail Services business segment reporting directly to CEO Sam Mitchell. Flees joins Valvoline after nearly a decade with Walmart, where she most recently held the position of senior vice president and chief operating officer of its health and wellness division. "Lori is an exceptional business leader, and we are excited to welcome her to Valvoline," said Mitchell. "As we continue to invest in our industry-leading automotive service network, Lori's experiences in strategy, innovation and applying technology in the retail space will be a great fit for our Valvoline Instant Oil Change operations." As president of Valvoline Retail Services, Flees will be leading the company's fast-growing business segment, which includes more than 1,600 locations across the U.S. and Canada with a team of nearly 9,000 employees. "I am excited to join the Valvoline team," said Flees. "I'm impressed by the strong growth track record driven by an unwavering focus on delivering a consistently high





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quality, quick and friendly experience to customers every day.” Flees joined Walmart in 2014 as the SVP, Corporate Strategy. In addition to developing the company’s strategy, she was responsible for all acquisition and integration activities, including Jet.com, Bonobos, Moosejaw.com and Shoes.com. She was then promoted to SVP, Next Generation Retail & Principal, Store No 8. In that role, she led the incubation of next generation retail capabilities leveraging emerging technologies and managing all strategic partnerships (including Google and Microsoft), as well as launching several joint venture partnerships. In her last role, she oversaw all aspects of the Health & Wellness business across more than 4,800 locations, including the COVID vaccination operations focusing on protecting both customers and associates. Prior to her leadership experience at Walmart, Flees spent 17 years at Bain & Company Inc., where she did a variety of work in consumer services, CPG, engineering and construction, industrial manufacturing and oil and gas. She has extensive experience in M&A, corporate strategy and performance improvement, including experience developing growth strategies for retailers with a combination of company-owned and franchised stores. Early in her career, Flees worked at Intel and at General Motors. “With 15 straight years of same-store sales growth,” Mitchell continued, “Lori will be leading a talented and dedicated Retail Services team into our next phase of growth.” Flees begins her role at Valvoline on April 11. *Source: Aftermarket News*

ElectraMeccanica Taps Seasoned Auto Exec as COO

ElectraMeccanica Vehicles Corp, a designer and manufacturer of electric vehicles, has announced the appointment of Joseph Mitchell as chief operating officer of the company, effective on April 1. Mitchell brings decades of experience in the automotive industry and most recently served as the CEO at Phoenix Motorcars, a subsidiary of SPI Energy, a global renewable energy company and provider of solar storage EV solutions. Mitchell was responsible for full P&L, strategic and business planning, operation planning and creating the product roadmap for Phoenix Motorcars. Previously, he served as president, CEO and a director of UQM Technologies Inc., a leading supplier of electric propulsion systems for the commercial and automotive EV markets. UQM was acquired by Danfoss Power Solutions, where Mitchell played an integral role in the company’s merger. In that respect he had direct management of all functions, including sales, engineering, operations, purchasing and finance, interfacing with the Danfoss European organization to ensure a successful integration post-merger. Mitchell began his career at the Ford Motor Co. as a quality engineer in the glass division. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Niagara University, and a Masters in Business Administration from the Owen Graduate School of Management at Vanderbilt University. Kevin Pavlov, CEO of ElectraMeccanica, commented, “I am pleased to announce the appointment of Joe Mitchell as our Chief Operating Officer. His decades in the automotive industry as an experienced leader challenging the status quo to shape and steer innovation is directly aligned with ElectraMeccanica’s mission. Joe has had significant expertise driving growth, competitive positioning and profitability across emerging markets. I look forward to working Joe and welcome him to the team.” Mitchell added, “I am excited to join ElectraMeccanica at such a pivotal time in the Company’s history as deliveries of the Company’s iconic SOLO EV are rolled out nationwide. I look forward to leveraging my industry expertise to further fuel growth, maximize profitability and position the company for continued success.” *Source: Aftermarket News*

N.A. Williams Announces Leadership Changes

The board of directors of N.A. Williams company has accepted the request of Roger McCollum to step down as CEO and transition to the role of executive chairman as of June 1, 2022. At that time, Chris Williams will assume the role of president and CEO. Neal Williams Jr. will continue as executive vice president and vice chairman. N.A. Williams Company is a leading manufacturers’ representative firm that provides sales, field training, call center services, and data analytics to the North American auto care and commercial vehicle industry. Founded in 1934, N.A. Williams is headquartered in Atlanta, with more than 130 associates nationwide. Williams will be the fourth CEO in the 88-year history of N.A. Williams. He joined the company in 1993 and has held management positions of increasing responsibility throughout his 29-year career. He was promoted to executive vice president in 2007 and elected president in 2017. “Chris has demonstrated exceptional leadership throughout his career. He is respected throughout the industry, understands our business from the ground up, and is the right person to lead our company into its next period of growth,” said McCollum. “While I’m not retiring, the time has come for me to pass the torch to the next generation and support our team, manufacturers and customers as executive chairman. I intend to remain engaged with our business and the industry for many years to come.” McCollum joined N.A. Williams Co. in 1984 and served as the company’s president from 1997 to 2017. He was elected CEO in 2007 and chairman of the board in 2014, and currently serves in both positions. He has directed and integrated several mergers and acquisitions which have greatly expanded, diversified and strengthened the company’s business. “It is an honor to take on this new role,” said Williams. “Our primary focus has always been the success of our team members, customers and manufacturers, and that will not change. We will continue to work in our stakeholders’ best interest and are grateful that Roger will continue on as executive chairman to help shape our strategy well into the future.” *Source: Aftermarket News*

