



Top AutoMobility Stories

April 2022

- **Yokohama Names Sr. Director of Supply Chain, Logistics**
- **Michael Blawas Named Next CFO of MEMA**
- **Hamaton Announces Vice President of North American Subsidiary**
- **Standard Motor Products Announces Appointment of New Director**
- **'The Group' Announces Organizational Changes**
- **REE Automotive Appoints Josh Tech as Chief Operations Officer**
- **Truck-Lite Adds VP to Oversee Manufacturing & Supply Chain**
- **CDK Global to be acquired by investment firm in \$8.3 billion deal**
- **ASE Announces Personnel Changes**
- **Redline Detection Taps Kinkade for Global Business Development**
- **AutoCanada hires two top managers from AutoNation**
- **GM bulks up D.C. office with expanded role, new hires**
- **William Quigley III Added to ElectraMeccanica Board**
- **Matt Fowler Named Director of Sales at Visual SKUs**
- **Jaguar Land Rover hires former VW executive Mueller**
- **American Axle bolsters electrification strategy with acquisition of Tekfor**
- **Eaton Names Marco Martini President, Vehicle Group, Europe, Middle East and Africa**
- **Cooper Standard Names VP, Chief Commercial & Strategy Officer**
- **Hyzon Motors Appoints Samuel Chong as New CFO**
- **XL Fleet Taps Donald Klein as CFO**
- **HDA Truck Pride Names Laura Hewitt VP of Info Technology**
- **Volta Inc. Appoints Brandt Hastings Interim CEO**
- **Rivian Names First Chief Sustainability Officer**
- **CarParts.com Expands Executive Team to Accelerate Technology Growth**
- **Smart Eye Appoints New VP of Automotive Fleet, Aftermarket**
- **Alltech Automotive Expands Sales Team**
- **SAF-HOLLAND Names Kevin Layton Director, Aftermarket Sales**
- **Rich Sullivan Retires from NTK Technologies**
- **McLaren names Leiters, Ferrari's former tech chief, CEO**
- **AAM Promotes Two Senior Team Members**
- **DENSO Products and Services Americas Announces Two Promotions**
- **Airpro Diagnostics Names Fred Iantorno to VP Role**
- **Plastic Omnium agrees to acquire units of lighting supplier Varroc for \$634 million**
- **Valvoline Appoints Jennifer Slater to Board of Directors**
- **Industry Veteran Mike Buzzard Joins Schwartz Advisors Team**





Top AutoMobility Stories

April 2022

Yokohama Names Sr. Director of Supply Chain, Logistics

Yokohama Tire Corp. (YTC) announced that Ray Polentz has been promoted to senior director of supply chain and logistics. “Ray has been instrumental in helping us negotiate through the difficult and complex supply chain issues facing the industry,” said Jeff Barna, YTC president and CEO. “His experience in all aspects of logistics – operations management, freight, transportation and warehouse operations – has made him a major asset to the company.” Polentz, who works out of YTC headquarters in Santa Ana, California, joined Yokohama in October 2017 as regional distribution center manager. He was promoted to director of distribution operations in July 2018. Before joining Yokohama, Polentz had 15+ years of supply chain and logistics experience. Previously he held senior positions at JCPenney, as well as Stein Mart in both operational and transportation roles. Prior to his supply chain and logistics career, Polentz served in the U.S. Army and was a police officer. Currently, he is pursuing his Master’s degree in Global Supply Chain Management at Purdue University. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Michael Blawas Named Next CFO of MEMA

Michael Blawas has been named chief financial officer (CFO) of the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association (MEMA). Blawas brings extensive experience to his new role and replaces Wendy Earp, who joined MEMA 21 years ago. “The work of MEMA and its four divisions is critically important to the overall vehicle supplier industry, now more than ever,” said MEMA President and CEO Bill Long. “The choice of Mike Blawas aligns with the association’s ethical standards of managing its resources with the highest integrity.” Prior to joining MEMA, Blawas served as CFO at SouthTech Orthopedics in Raleigh, N.C. Throughout his career, he worked in various financial roles at DuPont, General Electric, and NC Electric Cooperatives. He is a licensed CPA in N.C., a Registered Investment Advisor (RIA), and a Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA). Blawas received an MBA in finance from The Ohio State University and his bachelor’s from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. “Wendy Earp has been a trusted advisor who will be greatly missed,” Long said. “We look forward to Mike Blawas continuing the legacy of excellent leadership and solid financial stewardship, positioning MEMA for the future.” *Source: Aftermarket News*

Hamaton Announces Vice President of North American Subsidiary

Hamaton, a TPMS product and tire valve manufacturer, has announced the promotion of Enri Osmani, general manager of Hamaton Inc., to vice president of the company’s North American distribution and technical center. Understanding the need for strong leadership to launch Hamaton Inc., the company appointed Enri as General Manager. Enri, who has worked in the TPMS market for 12 years, has invaluable experience and a tremendous network within the industry. When the Michigan-based subsidiary opened in 2016, Enri was responsible for coordinating the company’s initial development, ensuring the customer base received industry-leading sales and technical support. Since then, the company has gone from strength to strength, building a strong rapport with customers and repeatedly exceeding its challenging targets. Osmani’s leadership has been integral to the substantial growth of Hamaton Inc., which has helped Hamaton strengthen its comprehensive TPMS offering throughout the North American market. “Jack Zhang, president of Hamaton Automotive Technology Co., Ltd., and I want to thank Enri for his hard work and dedication over the past six years, and congratulate him on his well-earned promotion to vice president of Hamaton Inc. We are both very proud of his achievements. Enri has developed an excellent team, in line with best business practices, and has taken Hamaton Inc. from ground zero to the thriving business it is today,” says Ian Smith, CEO of Hamaton. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Standard Motor Products Announces Appointment of New Director

Standard Motor Products Inc. (SMP) has announced the appointment of Alejandro Cesar Capparelli as an independent director to the company’s board of directors. Capparelli will serve as a member of the Audit Committee, Compensation and Management Development Committee, Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee, and Strategic Planning Committee. In connection with the addition of Mr. Capparelli, SMP’s board of directors increased the size of the board from 10 to 11 directors. In addition, effective May 19, the board has approved a reduction in size from 11 to 10 directors upon the retirement of Richard Ward. Capparelli currently serves as the vice president of Global Commercial Lifecycle Services of Rockwell Automation Inc., an industrial automation and digital transformation company. He previously served as Rockwell Automation President in the Americas from 2020 to 2022, and president of Latin America from 2016 to 2020. Capparelli also held numerous roles of increasing responsibility in Rockwell’s sales, marketing, engineering, operations and customer support operations. Capparelli holds a BS in Electrical Engineering from Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata (Argentina). Lawrence I. Sills, Standard Motor Products’ chairman of the board, stated, “We are very pleased to welcome Alejandro to our board of directors. Alejandro brings over 20 years of experience in engineering, industrial automation and digital transformation. In addition, Alejandro’s deep knowledge of international business development and strategy will greatly assist our Company in enhancing our business strategy abroad, and his business and senior leadership skills will be valuable assets to our board. We look forward to Alejandro’s contributions to our company.” *Source: Aftermarket News*

‘The Group’ Announces Organizational Changes

The Automotive Parts Services Group (The Group) has made organizational changes to its management team, according to Larry Pavey, CEO of The Group. The board of directors of The Group has appointed Mike Mohler and Jason Scott to new, expanded leadership positions, effective immediately. Mohler will take on the role of executive vice president and chief purchasing officer while Scott will assume the role of executive vice





Top AutoMobility Stories

April 2022

president and chief strategy officer. “The Group continues to grow and expand services across a continually changing market landscape, so it is important that our day-to-day activities are synchronized with established corporate objectives,” said Pavey. “By making these key personnel appointments, the board of directors has sent a clear message of the importance of corporate continuity and alignment across the various disciplines of The Group.” “At The Group, we work to optimize relationships and maximize effectiveness throughout the entire supply chain. Key to that effort is the synchronization of corporate strategy and tactical implementation throughout the organization,” said Mohler. “These new structural changes will enable The Group, as well as the talented teams at Federated and The Pronto Network, to work in concert and deliver ever-increasing value to members, supplier partners and customers. I look forward to working closely with Jason to ensure a successful future for all of our stakeholders.” “The right balance between strategic and tactical execution is critical to the success of any organization. As we build for the future, the new structure of The Group will allow for a heightened focus on both areas,” added Scott. “In our new roles, Mike and I will work with our partners at Federated and The Pronto Network to address each aspect of the business and strategically execute plans that deliver significant value to our members, suppliers and associates.” *Source: Aftermarket News*

REE Automotive Appoints Josh Tech as Chief Operations Officer

REE Automotive has announced the appointment of operations and manufacturing executive Josh Tech as the company’s new chief operations officer (COO). Tech joins REE after serving on Tesla’s Operations Leadership Team as head of the New Product/Manufacturing Introduction group. Previously, he oversaw manufacturing development and launch at a worldwide leader in automotive exterior design, development, and manufacturing, and most recently served as vice president of manufacturing and engineering for one of America’s most advanced construction technology firms, Plant Prefab. Based in the U.S., Josh replaces Michael Charlton, who will serve as strategic advisor on manufacturing, extending his decades of global automotive and manufacturing expertise to the REE leadership team. Tech brings more than 23 years of experience to REE in complex product development and launch, industrialization, infrastructure development, engineering, supply chain, quality, and operations management. As REE’s COO, he will be based in the U.S. and lead all aspects of REE’s operations, manufacturing, and global expansion management, including leveraging his unique talent for the launch of REE’s integration centers in Austin, Texas, and Coventry, UK. Tech joins REE at a momentous time for the company, as it prepares for full vehicle prototype testing for customers in 2022 on its path toward commercial production of its REEcorners and modular REEboard EV platforms in 2023. Under his leadership, REE’s integration centers will serve demand in North America and Europe with initial focus on the commercial launch of REE’s P7 platform, intended to power commercial electric vehicles such as walk-in delivery vans, buses, and recreational vehicles. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Truck-Lite Adds VP to Oversee Manufacturing & Supply Chain

Truck-Lite has hired Aaron Justice as vice president of operations to lead the manufacturing, supply chain and quality functions for its U.S. business unit, including oversight of three Truck-Lite manufacturing facilities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. “Today’s LED lighting is increasingly electronic, more intelligent and more efficient — a trend that will accelerate as commercial vehicles to shift to electric power,” said Doug Wolma, president of Clariance Technologies. “Aaron has joined Truck-Lite at an exciting time in our industry, and we look forward to his leadership to ensure the company is best prepared to deliver the right products customers will need for tomorrow.” Justice most recently served as plant manager at Eaton Corp. and has more than seven years of manufacturing leadership experience. He also served for more than 10 years in the United States Air Force. Justice holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics with a minor in Civil Engineering from the United States Military Academy, and a Master of Business Administration degree in Operations from Vanderbilt University. Truck-Lite was founded in Jamestown, New York, in 1955 and maintains a strong presence across the region today. Truck-Lite and parent company Clariance Technologies employs nearly 1,000 people in the region — approximately one-third of its entire global workforce — across three Truck-Lite U.S. manufacturing locations in McElhattan, Wellsboro, and Coudersport, PA, as well as at the Truck-Lite Corporate Headquarters in Falconer, NY, and the Clariance Technologies Global Research and Development Center in Pittsburgh. Though the brand is no stranger to innovation —Truck-Lite created the first sealed light over 65 years ago which sparked a revolution in truck and trailer safety lighting—the need for new innovations has grown as electric, autonomous and connected vehicle technologies arrive to commercial transportation. Truck-Lite recently introduced “At the Speed of Light,” an initiative to accelerate development of new technology applications and product innovations that better serve customers, for this reason. The industry’s shift toward electric is also a major reason driving the company’s decision to relocate Truck-Lite corporate headquarters from Falconer, New York, to Knowledge Park at Penn State Behrend in Erie, PA, the company says. The new facility is expected to be fully operational this summer. This state-of-the-art facility will house an innovation lab and provides the company with opportunities to collaborate with students, academics and other technology leaders in the area surrounding the university. *Source: Aftermarket News*

CDK Global to be acquired by investment firm in \$8.3 billion deal

CDK Global Inc. said it agreed to be acquired by investment firm Brookfield Business Partners in a deal valued at \$8.3 billion that would take the publicly traded dealership software giant private. The dealership management system provider based in Hoffman Estates, Ill., said Thursday that Brookfield will purchase all of CDK’s outstanding shares, with CDK shareholders receiving \$54.87 per share in cash when the transaction closes, expected in the third quarter. The price would reflect a 30 percent premium to CDK’s closing share price on Feb. 18, which the company said was the last full day of trading before market speculation began about a possible sale. CDK shares rose 11.3 percent to \$54.51 in midday trading. Upon





Top AutoMobility Stories

April 2022

closing, CDK's stock no longer will be publicly traded. "This transaction is an exciting next step for CDK that provides our shareholders with both certainty of value and a meaningful premium. It also allows CDK to continue executing our long-term strategy to connect our industry at every level and create an open and collaborative future," CDK CEO Brian Krzanich said in a statement. "In consultation with our outside advisors, CDK's board of directors carefully evaluated a range of strategic and financial alternatives over several months and determined that this transaction is superior to all other available alternatives." Brookfield Business Partners is a unit of global alternative asset management firm Brookfield Asset Management's private equity group. "Brookfield recognizes the unique value our products bring to more than 15,000 retail locations in North America and shares our vision of transforming the future of automotive retail," Krzanich said. "We are excited about the opportunity to further sharpen our focus on elevating the dealer and consumer experience when selling, buying or owning a vehicle." CDK has expanded beyond its core DMS business, which had 9,181 automotive customer sites as of Dec. 31, into other dealership software products. In June, CDK acquired digital retailing provider Roadster for \$360 million. Also last year, CDK acquired Salty Dot Inc., an insurance technology company that allows consumers to buy auto insurance at the same time they buy a vehicle. CDK said Morgan Stanley & Co. is its financial adviser and Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison is its legal adviser. Davis Polk & Wardwell is legal adviser to Brookfield Business Partners. *Source: Automotive News*

ASE Announces Personnel Changes

The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) has named Matt Shepanek as its new vice president of credential testing programs and Rebecca Sutter as chief technology officer. In addition, ASE announced the retirement of longtime vice president of credential testing programs Dave Milne after a 26-year career at ASE. "We are excited to add Matt and Rebecca to our staff," said Tim Zilke, president and CEO of ASE. "Both bring an impressive variety of experiences and knowledge to ASE, and we know they will make a positive impact on our organization. As we continue to expand testing options and add technology, Matt and Rebecca will be instrumental in helping us achieve our goals over the next several years." In his new role, Shepanek will be responsible for the credential testing programs and the ASE Training Managers Council (ATMC). He has spent his entire career in the automotive industry, starting out as a technician, working for an automotive supplier and spending 19 years at VW/Audi as technical curriculum designer/technical training manager. Sutter will be responsible for all ASE strategic information technology initiatives, including internal and external technology, IT vendor relations and overall staff IT support. She has over 37 years of extensive technology experience, and most recently served as vice president of information systems for Health Communications Inc. in Arlington, Virginia. A 47-year veteran of the automotive industry, Milne began his automotive career in 1973 as a safety inspector in a four-bay service station. After several years as a technician, he made the transition to the parts industry, eventually opening his own store and growing the business to several stores. Having worked with ASE in the development of the parts specialist credential, Milne accepted an offer to join the ASE staff, managing the parts program. During his 26 years with ASE, Milne's responsibilities expanded. In his most recent role, he managed the staff that develops, maintains and assembles all the ASE credential tests and was responsible for reviving ATMC into a thriving network that advances training, conducts valuable research, and promotes the auto and truck service industry. "It goes without saying how important Dave Milne has been to the growth and success of ASE over the past 26 years," said Zilke. "Dave is very well-respected throughout the industry and we can't thank him enough for all he has done to advance the knowledge, training and skills of service and parts professionals. We wish him all the best in his retirement. He will be missed." *Source: Aftermarket News*

Redline Detection Taps Kinkade for Global Business Development

Redline Detection announced Chuck Kinkade has joined the company to oversee Global Business Development. Chuck comes to Redline from Mahle, where he was head of workshop engineering and product management. He also previously worked for Bosch North America as a sales manager of new business development. "I'm thrilled to join the Redline Detection team and help develop the next generation of technology solutions for our global OEM partners," said Kinkade. Kinkade earned a degree in Electrical Engineering from Lawrence Technological University, as well as a master's degree from Central Michigan University. He has an extensive background in the automotive industry, with experience in engineering, sales, product management, and business development. Chuck holds several patents in automotive repair and telematics related vehicle diagnostics. Kinkade brings his valuable experience as the company is experiencing steep growth with the development of new EV diagnostic leak detection technology for leading automakers in 160 countries around the world, says Redline Detection. Kinkade is active in the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) and the Technology and Maintenance Council (TMC). He resides in the Detroit area and in his spare time he enjoys traveling, building radio-controlled models, and riding his Aprilia Tuono 1100 motorcycle very, very fast. *Source: Aftermarket News*

AutoCanada hires two top managers from AutoNation

AutoCanada Inc. has hired away two AutoNation Inc. managers, naming one of them as its new president to head Canadian operations, following the departure of Michael Rawluk on March 3. Jeffrey Thorpe, market president for Fort Lauderdale, Fla.-based AutoNation, will take over oversight of publicly-traded AutoCanada's 60 Canadian dealerships as president of those operations, the Edmonton, Alberta firm said Friday. AutoCanada Executive Chair Paul Antony said Thorpe has "proven himself" scaling organizations and has both the vision and business acumen to keep the dealership group's momentum going. "His significant industry expertise and experience operating a dealership platform at scale using centralized services through [a] head office, which closely mirrors AutoCanada's operating rhythm, will be an excellent addition to our executive team," Antony said in a release. Thorpe previously steered AutoNation's operations across several markets in the Midwest and Western U.S., including Colorado, Minnesota, Chicago, Cleveland, Northern California and Los Angeles. The more than 24-year AutoNation veteran will relocate from Denver to





Top AutoMobility Stories

April 2022

Edmonton. AutoCanada also named Brian Feldman, domestic market brand president at AutoNation, as senior vice president of Canadian operations and disruptive technologies, reporting to Thorpe. He had worked in numerous roles at AutoNation for more than 18 years, according to his LinkedIn profile, and in 2014 was named a 40 Under 40 honoree by Automotive News. Prior to AutoNation, Feldman worked for Ford Motor Co. AutoCanada also said it appointed Lee Wittick as senior vice president of operations and OEM relations. Wittick joins AutoCanada from Toronto's Humberview Group. Most recently, he was managing partner at Applewood Chevrolet-Cadillac-Buick-GMC and Mississauga Kia, two of the dealership group's 21 locations. With the American auto market "ahead of Canada by five years," Antony added, AutoCanada expects to leverage best practices from Thorpe and Feldman to supplement the current playbook at the dealership group's Canadian locations. AutoCanada operates 78 new-vehicle dealerships in both Canada and the United States where it has dealerships in Illinois. AutoNation ranks No. 1 on Automotive News' list of the top 150 dealership group based in the U.S., retailing 262,403 new-vehicles in 2021. *Source: Automotive News*

GM bulks up D.C. office with expanded role, new hires

General Motors is further expanding its presence here with a newly expanded job position and four hires within its global public policy team.

- Hollyn Kidd Schuemann has been named executive director and head of federal affairs, effective April 16. In the expanded role, she'll continue to be responsible for implementing GM's political strategy and policy development to support its vision of zero crashes, emissions and congestion. Schuemann has worked within GM's public policy team since 2018 as executive director of federal affairs.
- Darrell Doss has been hired as director of federal affairs. He started Monday in the role, where he's responsible for managing GM's financial services advocacy portfolio as well as providing support to its global diversity group and its partnership with the Congressional Black Caucus. Before joining the automaker, Doss was the caucus's policy director under Chairwoman Joyce Beatty and spent 15 years working for congressional leaders in the House and Senate.
- Zaina Shaath has joined as director of policy operations and protocol. Shaath also started Monday and is responsible for leading the coordination of events and meetings. Previously, she worked at the White House as special assistant to the president and deputy director within the Office of Administration.
- Daniel Amick was named manager of policy research and intelligence. He started Monday and will support GM's business priorities and advocacy. Before joining GM, he was managing director at strategic advisory firm Martin+Crumpton Group.
- Alethea Gordon will be director of global affairs, effective April 25. She's tasked with advocating for GM on complex global issues and working with key stakeholders. She joins the automaker after a career in the U.S. State Department and Defense Department.

The expanded job position and new hires follow an ongoing effort by GM to strengthen its presence in Washington and bulk up its office here as the automaker pivots toward electric vehicles. In February, GM hired Missy Owens — a former senior official in the Obama administration and niece of President Joe Biden — as director of environment, sustainability and governance policy within the Detroit automaker's global regulatory affairs and transportation policy group. GM's D.C. hiring strategy has included the addition of former NHTSA chief David Strickland to the team in September and public policy veteran Omar Vargas in July. The election of CEO Mary Barra to a two-year term as chair of the Business Roundtable, a Washington group that represents the CEOs of some of America's largest companies, also amps up the automaker's D.C. clout. The announcement of GM's hires comes a day after Barra and other top executives from a broad range of automakers met with members of the Biden administration to discuss EV policy. *Source: Automotive News*

William Quigley III Added to ElectraMeccanica Board

ElectraMeccanica Vehicles Corp., a designer and manufacturer of electric vehicles revolutionizing the urban driving experience, has announced the appointment of William (Bill) Quigley III to its board of directors. Quigley is an accomplished leader with a proven track record in large enterprises specific to the automotive industry. With 30 plus years in the industry, Quigley's career has included the following key roles: executive vice president and CFO at Dana Holding Corp/, an automotive, commercial vehicle and off-highway driveline, sealing and thermal tier 1 supplier; executive vice president and CFO at Visteon Corp., an automotive systems supplier; and vice president and controller/chief accounting officer at Federal-Mogul Corp., a developer, manufacturer and supplier of a diverse range of OEM and aftermarket automotive products. Most recently, Quigley served as senior vice president and CFO at Nexteer Automotive Group Limited, a \$3.5 billion steering and driveline tier 1, automotive supplier, assuming the role in 2016. Additionally, since 2015 he has served as a director and Audit Committee Chairman for Cadre Holdings Inc., a global leader in the manufacture and distribution of safety and survivability equipment for first responders. Quigley graduated with a bachelor's degree in Accounting from Michigan State University and is a Certified Public Accountant. "Bill joins our Board of Directors with a wealth of industry knowledge and expertise," said Kevin Pavlov, CEO of ElectraMeccanica. "As we continue to strive for excellence at ElectraMeccanica, we will benefit from his direct experience and documented success in the development and execution of strategic initiatives while delivering sustainable improvements. His knowledge of working with manufacturing and a strategic supply base brings great benefit to the Company as we near the completion of our Mesa Facility and continue to scale production." Quigley added, "I am honored to be joining the board at such an important point in the company's evolution. I look forward to working with Kevin and the board, leveraging my industry experience as production scales and deliveries of the flagship SOLO EV are rolled out nationwide for many more to enjoy the exciting and unique driving experience." *Source: Aftermarket News*

Matt Fowler Named Director of Sales at Visual SKUs

Gregg McDonald / Managing Partner / Maccabeus LLC

+1 (770) 557-4458 / Gregg@MaccabeusLLC.com / www.MaccabeusLLC.com





Top AutoMobility Stories

April 2022

Visual SKUs Inc. announced the addition of Matt Fowler as Director of Sales. Fowler will be bringing his business, sales, and content solutions experience to Visual SKUs to provide aftermarket manufacturers with product photography services and digital asset management solutions. Matt's unique experience is centered around building growth minded sales processes for multiple technology startups including Snap36, the company says. Visual SKUs says it will benefit from Matt's experience in these areas: Nearly 10 years of dedication to the Automotive Aftermarket, developing long-term relationships with manufacturers and retailers contributing to their growth and competitiveness in the fast-growing world of eCommerce; Extensive experience providing businesses with comprehensive digital content solutions for maximizing eCommerce effectiveness; Thorough knowledge of product information and digital asset standards in the Aftermarket, and how they impact content solutions. "We are very happy to have Matt join our business development team," says Claudio Di Sano, Visual SKUs' CEO. "Matt is great at understanding the content solutions businesses need to be successful at eCommerce, and how to best implement them, a rare skill set for any business development professional." "With Visual SKUs', I am able to provide Aftermarket companies an industry-leading end-to-end digital asset solution." Says Matt. "One that allows them to produce high-quality still and 360 images, manage assets efficiently internally, and automate the resource-intensive process of formatting, renaming, and distributing their digital assets." *Source: Aftermarket News*

Jaguar Land Rover hires former VW executive Mueller

Jaguar Land Rover has hired Thomas Mueller, a former Volkswagen Group executive and autonomous driving specialist, to lead the automaker's product engineering. Mueller replaces Nick Rogers, who left JLR at the end of the year after 37 years at the company. Prior to joining JLR on April 1, Mueller was head of advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) and autonomous driving at VW's Cariad software division. Mueller has led the ADAS and autonomous driving function of Cariad since the beginning of 2020 after he moved from Audi. Mueller spent 18 years in various engineering roles at the VW Group's premium arm and rose to the position of head of chassis development in 2016. He added the responsibility for developing ADAS and autonomous driving systems at Audi in 2018. Mueller was born in Brazil and graduated from the Technical University Munich with a master's in mechanical engineering. *Source: Automotive News*

American Axle bolsters electrification strategy with acquisition of Tekfor

Detroit-based American Axle Manufacturing is investing in electrification and benefitting from the industry consolidation in the internal combustion engine space. American Axle & Manufacturing Holdings Inc. is acquiring Tekfor Group in a deal valued at more than \$135 million as the U.S. automotive supplier expands its electrification portfolio. American Axle's purchase of the Hausach, Germany-based company, announced Monday, comes with 2,100 employees across eight plants in Europe and America, including one in Ohio. The deal is subject to regulatory approvals and expected to close in the second quarter. "This acquisition leverages the core strengths of AAM with significant synergy potential, diversifies our geographic and customer sales mix and increases our electrification product portfolio. In addition, this purchase fits nicely with our recent tactical M&A approach," AAM Chairman and CEO David Dauch said in a news release. "We are excited to expand our metal forming technologies to serve a broad range of global customers." The deal follows Detroit-based American Axle's \$15 million investment in Silicon Valley venture capital firm Autotech Ventures in February and its push for electrified drive units, wheel end motors and e-beam axles. Despite its investment in electrification, American Axle is keeping roots planted in the internal combustion engine, where it is reaping benefits of industry consolidation. The company took a \$46.3 million blow in the fourth quarter due to turbulent production, labor shortages and supply chain problems. Still, Dauch said in February that the company will benefit from competitors exiting the powertrain and driveline space as the industry moves toward electric vehicles. American Axle shares gained nearly 5 percent to \$7.07 per share Monday morning following news of the acquisition. American Axle ranks No. 47 on the Automotive News list of the top 100 global suppliers, with worldwide parts sales to automakers of \$4.71 billion in 2020. *Source: Automotive News*

Eaton Names Marco Martini President, Vehicle Group, Europe, Middle East and Africa

Power management company Eaton announced that Marco Martini has been named president, Vehicle Group, Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA). Martini will be responsible for leading all business growth and operational activities in the EMEA region. He will continue to be located in Torino, Italy. "Marco's diverse background and broad leadership experience make him an excellent fit to lead the Vehicle Group in EMEA," said João Faria, president, Eaton's Vehicle Group. "We believe Marco's strong financial and operational proficiency will help our business thrive in the region." Martini joined Eaton as a manufacturing controller and was promoted to director, Finance, Vehicle Group, EMEA. Most recently, he served as director, Operations, Vehicle Group, EMEA. Prior to joining Eaton, he worked in the appliance industry for 15 years in various finance roles in Italy, the United Kingdom, Mexico and Russia. Martini holds a degree in business and administration from the Marche Polytechnics University in Ancona, Italy. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Cooper Standard Names VP, Chief Commercial & Strategy Officer

Cooper Standard has announced the appointment of Shannon B. Quinn to vice president, chief commercial and strategy officer. In her new role, Quinn will be responsible for the global commercial group and corporate strategy, and will report to Patrick Clark, senior vice president and managing director – global automotive. Based at the company's world headquarters in Northville, Michigan, Quinn also will join Cooper Standard's Global Leadership Team. "With more than 25 years of experience spanning a wide range of functions and product areas, Shannon is a great fit for her new role as chief commercial and strategy officer and member of our global leadership team," said Clark. "She is a creative, proactive and an enthusiastic





Top AutoMobility Stories

April 2022

leader with an established record of improving performance. We are pleased to welcome Shannon to Cooper Standard and I am confident that she will be a key contributor in the continued growth and progress of the Company.” Prior to joining Cooper Standard, Quinn served as president, consumer original equipment (OE) North America for Bridgestone Corp. from 2017 to 2022. In this role, she was responsible for leading business development, commercial negotiations, program management, strategy and the overall profit and loss for the business unit. She also led the new initiative to expand Bridgestone’s overall business with new OE’s and new mobility players. Previously, she held titles of increasing responsibility at Adient and its predecessor Johnson Controls, serving as vice president, Ford business unit, where she was responsible for leading all new business pursuit opportunities and generation of revenue plans supporting overall business projections. She joined the global automotive supplier as managing director for the Ford business unit in 2011. From 2000 to 2011, Quinn held several strategic commercial positions with Visteon Corp. She began her career as a product engineer at Ford Motor Co. in 1991. Quinn earned a Bachelor of Science degree in industrial engineering from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, and a Master of Business Administration from Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti. She has also completed multiple exclusive executive leadership development programs. She has served as an OESA (Original Equipment Supplier Association) director and an Automotive Hall of Fame board director. Quinn currently serves as a board director for Vista Maria and the Board Development Committee. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Hyzon Motors Appoints Samuel Chong as New CFO

Hyzon Motors Inc. announced it appointed Samuel Chong as chief financial officer (CFO), effective April 12. Chong will succeed Mark Gordon, who has served as Hyzon’s CFO since August 2020. Gordon will assist with the transition and serve as a senior advisor over the next 12 months. Chong comes to Hyzon with significant financial executive experience in companies engaged in innovative new technologies. Most recently, he acted as treasurer and head of Investor Relations at Fluence Energy, a leading global provider of grid scale energy storage products and services and artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled digital applications for renewables and storage. Chong holds both a BA in Economics and an MBA from the University of Chicago. “We are delighted to have Sam join the growing Hyzon team and help drive the business towards scale production and profitability,” said Craig Knight, CEO. “Hyzon will benefit from his significant experience in investor relations and treasury functions, combined with his investment banking background. In addition, we would like to thank Mark for serving as Hyzon’s CFO. He was instrumental in guiding us through the business combination with Decarbonization Plus Acquisition Corporation and thereby setting the stage for Hyzon to be a public company. His deep understanding of energy, and the future role of hydrogen, has also been an invaluable resource.” “It is a privilege to join a global first mover and technology innovator in the rapidly evolving hydrogen mobility space.” said Chong. “I look forward to executing on the business plan to accelerate the clean energy transition by deploying zero emission commercial vehicles as well as building out an ecosystem of renewable and affordable hydrogen.” *Source: Aftermarket News*

XL Fleet Taps Donald Klein as CFO

Fleet electrification solutions provider XL Fleet Corp. announced Donald P. Klein has been appointed chief financial officer (CFO), effective April 11, 2022. Klein replaces Chris Goldner, who was appointed as the company’s interim CFO in February 2022. Prior to joining XL Fleet, Klein served as CFO of advanced, emission-certified engines and power systems provider Power Solutions International Inc. He joined Power Solutions in 2018 and has held various senior leadership positions including principal accounting officer and most recently, CFO. “I am excited to welcome Don to the leadership team at XL Fleet,” said Eric Tech, CEO of XL Fleet. “I had the privilege of working with Don in the past and have complete confidence in his ability to lead XL Fleet’s finance organization as we execute on our strategy and deliver value to all stakeholders. Don’s significant public company finance experience, combined with highly relevant industry and accounting experience, will serve invaluable to us. His forward-thinking mindset and operating expertise makes him uniquely qualified to join our leadership team. I look forward to his contributions to our success and growth over the long-term.” *Source: Aftermarket News*

HDA Truck Pride Names Laura Hewitt VP of Info Technology

HDA Truck Pride announced the appointment of Laura Hewitt as Vice President of Information Technology in a move to strengthen the company’s technology group. Leveraging her 25+ year of experience in the data and technology fields, Hewitt will lead the strategic planning, development, operations, and support for the organization. Throughout her career, Laura has been instrumental in the successful delivery of legacy system conversions, process improvement initiatives and new product development. “Technology is the leading strategic pillar for HDA Truck Pride and its members,” said Chief Operating Officer Bryan Funke. “It is the foundation that enables us to push the boundaries of our day-to-day, remove barriers for our members, and bring to life some of the greatest growth opportunities for the industry. Hewitt’s exemplary leadership and deep experience will be invaluable assets in unlocking HDA Truck Pride’s full potential, now and in the future.” “After years of experience in the data and technology industries, HDA Truck Pride offers me the opportunity to join the leader in parts distribution for the heavy-duty aftermarket. The culture of trust and respect, and the mission of HDA Truck Pride resonates with me deeply,” says Hewitt. “Looking forward, I am excited to impact our industry through technology advancements in a deep and meaningful way.” *Source: Aftermarket News*

Volta Inc. Appoints Brandt Hastings Interim CEO

Electric vehicle (“EV”) charging network Volta Inc. announced its Board of Directors appointed Brandt Hastings, chief revenue officer at Volta, as interim chief executive officer, effective immediately. Brandt will also retain his title as Volta’s CRO. This appointment follows Scott Mercer’s decision





Top AutoMobility Stories

April 2022

to step down as Chairman and CEO of Volta last month. The Board has commenced a formal search for a permanent CEO. Hastings is a revenue executive with two decades of experience building innovative business models and driving transformational growth for global companies such as iHeartMedia and Clear Channel Communications. Brandt currently leads Volta's advertising and charging solutions businesses to deliver measurable impact to top international brands, agency partners, commercial properties, and retail locations. "Brandt has been instrumental in building upon Volta's success and has an impressive track record in delivering growth for companies and their stakeholders," said Vince Cabbage, Co-Chair of the Board. "We have seen Brandt in action first hand and have the utmost confidence that his talents and leadership skills will drive results and accelerate Volta's business in this interim role." "Volta has a proven, unique business model that is well-positioned for growth," said Hastings. "I am excited to build on the company's vision and success, helping to accelerate a clean energy future that benefits all of our stakeholders." *Source: Aftermarket News*

Rivian Names First Chief Sustainability Officer

Rivian Automotive, Inc. ("Rivian") named Anisa Kamadoli Costa the company's Chief Sustainability Officer, effective April 18, 2022. She will be responsible for the company's sustainability roadmap for both the business and its products, and will help lead Forever, the foundation that Rivian established at its initial public offering with 1% of equity – 8.3 million shares. Anisa is the company's first Chief Sustainability Officer and will report directly to Rivian's Chief Executive Officer, RJ Scaringe. She will oversee accounting of carbon emissions and other sustainability metrics, enabling data to be embedded into operations to inform decisions company-wide, including those about product design, manufacturing, energy and charging infrastructure, materials sourcing, responsible mining, and aggressive waste management. Anisa will drive progress in ways that holistically consider the social and environmental aspects of any course of action. Rivian has committed to carbon neutrality by 2028 in its own operations – referred to as Scope 1 and 2 emissions by Greenhouse Gas Protocol, the world's most widely used greenhouse gas accounting standards – and by 2032 for Scope 3 categories along Rivian's full value chain, from suppliers to owner vehicle charging. "We could not be more thrilled to welcome Anisa to our leadership team," says Rivian Chief Executive Officer RJ Scaringe. "Across the organization, she will help us integrate environmental and social impact into our decisions. The sustainability strategies we set today will have lasting influence on our company and our world, and Anisa's mindset positions her extremely well to lead and drive these critical activities." She most recently held the position of Chief Sustainability Officer at Tiffany & Co. and Chairman and President of the Tiffany & Co. Foundation. Anisa holds a bachelor's degree from Barnard College and a master's degree in international affairs from Columbia University, and completed Harvard Business School's Program for Leadership Development. *Source: Aftermarket News*

CarParts.com Expands Executive Team to Accelerate Technology Growth

CarParts.com, a leading e-commerce auto parts company dedicated to getting drivers back on the road, announces that it has appointed Kals Subramanian as CTO, effective April 18, 2022. As previously announced, the Board of Directors recently unanimously promoted David Meniane to be the new CEO and this strategic new hire will be the first under his leadership. Mr. Subramanian joins CarParts.com after having served as Vice President of eCommerce Technology at Lowe's. He also has held leadership positions at Best Buy and Target in marketing technology, business intelligence, and customer experience products. With a focus on engineering, managing product, and building global teams, Kals has seen double-digit growth in initiatives under his leadership – ranging from service and sales growth to employee engagement. "As we continue to invest in technology and build upon the strong foundation we have established over the years, Kals will bring his unique eCommerce expertise and experience that will be of great value to the company," said David Meniane, CEO. "He will be an integral part of the team and critical to our mission of being a one-stop destination for customers' car repair needs." "The progress CarParts.com has made over the last three years is energizing and encouraging, and I look forward to working with internal and external stakeholders to continue to provide a best-in-class experience," said Subramanian. "The technology stack that Sanjiv Gomes has architected during his tenure is very impressive, and I'm honored to be part of the team that will take things into the future." To that end, Sanjiv Gomes will move into the newly created role of CIO which will allow him to better focus on engineering and architecture. "I'm excited by the opportunity and look forward to working with Kals. CarParts.com has always had a strong culture of innovation I'm grateful for the opportunity to support the development of strategies and initiatives that keep the industry and our customers top of mind." The strategic shift in leadership is in furtherance of CarParts.com's mission to disrupt the auto parts & repair aftermarket industry. On the heels of the company's most successful year to date in 2021, growth and innovation remain paramount, and the organization is looking to the future of its technological advancements. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Smart Eye Appoints New VP of Automotive Fleet, Aftermarket

Smart Eye, has announced the appointment of Magnus Brunzell as VP of Applied AI Systems. Brunzell will lead this business unit, responsible for the development and delivery of Smart Eye's end-to-end Driver Monitoring Systems for fleet and aftermarket. By combining the company's purpose-built proprietary hardware with its proven Driver Monitoring System (DMS) software, Smart Eye offers a plug-and-play product built on over 20 years of automotive experience, which Brunzell will help to scale globally. Driver Monitoring Systems have become an increasingly important safety feature — not just in newer passenger cars, but also for trucks, buses and the millions of cars already on the road. As a result, the demand for complete, out-of-the-box and easy to install Driver Monitoring Systems, including both hardware and software, has grown steadily over the last few years. To target this new and rapidly growing market, Smart Eye started Applied AI Systems in 2019, with the purpose of delivering a high-performing and cost-effective safety solution for fleet and aftermarket that is Euro NCAP and GSR compliant. Prior to being appointed its new VP, Brunzell has been deeply





Top AutoMobility Stories

April 2022

involved in the business unit as Director of Business Development, and has played an important role in developing Smart Eye's first DMS product for fleet and aftermarket customers. Today, the business unit consists of developers and a team tasked with sales, marketing and partnership management. The majority of the team is based at Smart Eye's headquarters in Gothenburg, Sweden. "Magnus has been part of the core team starting up this new business unit and bringing its first product to market," said Martin Krantz, CEO and founder of Smart Eye. "The automotive fleet and aftermarket are significant growth markets for Smart Eye. This product is also intended for low volume truck and bus OEMs who can benefit from an out-of-the-box solution. As proven by customer demand, our industry-leading technology addresses a void in this space. I have confidence in Magnus to take lead of Applied AI Systems as we start delivering this groundbreaking new DMS to fleet and aftermarket customers." "I'm very excited to step into this new role," said Brunzell, newly appointed VP of Applied AI Systems. "Over the past few years, I have seen how our hard work has resulted in an incredible Driver Monitoring System that is sure to take the automotive industry by storm. I'm beyond proud of what we have accomplished so far, and I look forward to seeing how our technology will make roads safer around the world and ultimately save lives." Brunzell has more than 25 years of experience in the automotive industry and has held a variety of technical, operations and business roles at companies including Alps Electric, Delphi Automotive Systems and Mecel. Brunzell has a Master's degree in Electrical Engineering from Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg, Sweden. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Alltech Automotive Expands Sales Team

Alltech Automotive announced the expansion of its sales force for the United States and Canada. Brett Lucht is the new western regional sales manager for the U.S. Over a 20-year career, Lucht has held many roles in the automotive and heavy-duty industry, Alltech says. He has also been active with both the Auto Care Association and YANG (Young Auto Care Network Group). Bruce Overton has joined Alltech as eastern regional sales manager for the U.S. and Canada. Overton has worked in regional and national sales management roles with companies such as Plews Edelmann, Old World Industries LLC, EIKO Global LLC, MPEC, Genuine Parts Company and Echlin, Inc., Alltech says. Bruce attended Northern Illinois University and has been the recipient of national academic and professional awards. "We are extremely excited to add Bruce and Brett to the Alltech team," said Richard Odom, sales director at Alltech Automotive. "They bring a wealth of experience and knowledge that will help take Alltech to the next level in the automotive aftermarket." *Source: Aftermarket News*

SAF-HOLLAND Names Kevin Layton Director, Aftermarket Sales

SAF-HOLLAND, a global manufacturer of trailer suspension and axle systems, truck suspensions, fifth wheels, landing gear, and coupling products, announces the appointment of Kevin Layton as director – aftermarket sales for SAF-Holland, reporting to Matt Wolfe, VP & GM – Aftermarket (Americas). In his role, Layton will be responsible for leading the U.S. aftermarket sales and service team to pursue sales growth through all channels, including OES, Independent aftermarket, OE dealers, and regional fleets. Layton joins SAF-Holland with more than 30 years of automotive and heavy-duty truck parts sales experience. From 1990 to 2011, he worked for Delphi in a variety of sales positions, ranging from senior product manager to international sales manager. In the past, he has also held positions that include sales director for Allison Transmission and Remy International. Most recently, Layton served as national sales manager at ZF Commercial Vehicle Technologies. "We are excited to welcome Kevin to the Aftermarket team at SAF-Holland," said Wolfe. "With his many years of experience building strong relationships in the commercial vehicle market, he brings a wealth of expertise to our customers." Layton received his bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering Technology from Purdue University and his MBA from the University of South Florida. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Rich Sullivan Retires from NTK Technologies

NTK Technologies Inc. has announced that Rich Sullivan, senior vice president and chief administrative officer, retired on March 31, 2022. Sullivan has been part of the NGK Spark Plugs, Co. LTD. organization for 37 years. He will continue to advise the NGK Japan executive team. Hired as a district sales manager for Northern California in 1985, Sullivan took on roles of increasing responsibility during his tenure with the company. He assumed leadership roles in sales, marketing, supply chain management, human resources, information technology, finance, legal and general affairs. He was also a member of NGK Spark Plugs CO. LTD's senior executive team, reporting to global leadership. Sullivan is credited with supporting the company's U.S. headquarters move and establishing a new sales and marketing team, redefining corporate administrative structure and support, supporting the acquisition of wells vehicle electronics, and overseeing the construction and assuming a leadership role with NGK's newest vision and innovation center, Venture Lab. "I would like to say that I had a vision 37 years ago of my path forward, but that is not the case. I was given opportunities and did my best to excel in them. I started as a spark plug salesman in Northern California, and it is appropriate that I end this chapter back where I started," stated Sullivan. *Source: Aftermarket News*

McLaren names Leiters, Ferrari's former tech chief, CEO

McLaren Automotive has hired Ferrari executive Michael Leiters as its CEO. Leiters, 50, replaces Mike Flewitt, who resigned from the British sports-car maker in October. Leiters stepped down as Ferrari's chief technology officer in December as part of a leadership reorganization at the Italian luxury brand. At Ferrari, Leiters oversaw the development of the first Ferrari series-production hybrid cars: the SF90 Stradale, the automaker's first plug-in hybrid launched in 2019 and the 296 GTB, its first plug-in hybrid V6, launched earlier this year. German-born Leiters has a doctorate in engineering and has also held senior positions at Porsche, where he worked for 13 years. His roles at Porsche included project manager for the Porsche Cayenne





Top AutoMobility Stories

April 2022

SUV. Leiters will oversee McLaren's 3,000-strong workforce and will help steer the company as it moves towards electrification and stabilizes its finances. The wider McLaren Group was forced to sell a range of assets after the key automotive division struggled to generate revenue during the coronavirus pandemic. McLaren Group sold a stake in its Formula One team, creating a new joint venture and also sold and is leasing back the company's combined headquarters and manufacturing facility in Woking, southern England. McLaren is about to start deliveries of the Artura hybrid supercar. McLaren's shareholders have been in discussions with Audi since late last year, about a potential acquisition of McLaren as a way to enter Formula 1 racing and promote its electric-car technology. *Source: Automotive News*

AAM Promotes Two Senior Team Members

The AAM Group announced the promotion of two senior employees: John DeBalso to Executive Vice President of Supplier Relations and David Ayers to Vice President of Operations. The promotion of DeBalso, a lifelong industry veteran who has been with AAM for 16 years, formalizes his position as a member of the executive team, AAM says. The former CAN board of directors member will continue to lead AAM's purchasing, compliance and supplier-relations efforts, including managing a team dedicated to exploring growth opportunities for the organization's distribution members and supplier partners. Ayers, previously AAM's Director of Marketing and current SEMA TORA Select committee member, will be shifting focus to concentrate on strategic marketing and technology projects and other operational priorities, AAM says. Andy Stacy, who was recently promoted to Marketing Manager, will be assuming oversight of AAM's day-to-day marketing activities. *Source: Aftermarket News*

DENSO Products and Services Americas Announces Two Promotions

DENSO Products and Services Americas, Inc. announced the promotion of Reggie Cruz to director of Corporate Planning and Manny Rodriguez to senior manager of Product Development. DENSO says the changes support the company's ongoing expansion to meet the growing demand for DENSO aftermarket automotive, commercial and industrial products and services, and its carbon-neutral initiatives. Their promotions took effect in March. Cruz has been with DENSO for more than 16 years and was senior manager of Product Development until his promotion to director of Corporate Planning. In the newly created position, DENSO says Cruz is responsible for overseeing business and corporate planning, financial services, and new business strategy development. He is also tasked with establishing the long-term direction of the organization, which includes anticipating future trends and spearheading carbon-neutral business opportunities. Rodriguez has been with DENSO more than 22 years and served as manager of Independent Aftermarket Product and Business Development prior to his promotion. As senior manager of Product Development, Rodriguez is responsible for collaborating with DENSO's engineering, procurement and supply chain teams on product development; creating and developing marketing strategies for new and existing products; and tracking key performance indicators. His other duties include long-term and short-term product development planning. *Source: Aftermarket News*

AirPro Diagnostics Names Fred Iantorno to VP Role

AirPro Diagnostics announced that it has hired Fred Iantorno as vice president of strategic solutions. In his position, Iantorno will assist in technology integration opportunities and market awareness of the AirPro Auggie (the company's ADAS calibration device) as well as AirPro Diagnostics' suite of advanced, brand-specific services. "In my previous positions, I have had the opportunity to witness the massive acceleration of automotive technology and the tremendous challenges it has presented across all service sectors to properly and efficiently repair advanced vehicle safety systems," said Iantorno. "I had the opportunity to take a deep dive into their technology and saw for myself how advanced the AirPro system really is. They have built solid, efficient solutions to service the aftermarket that is struggling with qualified technicians." Added AirPro Diagnostics CEO Lonnie Margol, "We are excited to welcome Fred to the team at AirPro Diagnostics. Fred has a wealth of experience in the automotive information technology and auto glass fields, which will further assist our company to meet market needs today and into tomorrow." The AirPro tool and calibration devices meet rigorous vehicle manufacturer requirements by having OEM-licensed software and multi-brand diagnostic applications resident and directly connected to the vehicle. ORION, AirPro's cloud-based diagnostic management system, is the hub by which all services are delivered within the company's "10-minute response pledge." AirPro Diagnostics is backed by a team of uniquely skilled, diagnostic brand specialists who provide reliable, efficient and accurate scanning, diagnostic and ADAS calibration solutions that meet the highest level of quality and safety standards. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Plastic Omnium agrees to acquire units of lighting supplier Varroc for \$634 million

Plastic Omnium has agreed to buy the European and North American automotive lighting units of Varroc Engineering for 600 million euros (\$634 million). The French supplier said Friday that it will create a new lighting business unit with expected revenue of \$1.1 billion, including sales from Osram Automotive Lighting Systems, which it bought last year for \$69 million. Plastic Omnium had also sought to acquire the German lighting supplier Hella, its partner on front-end modules, but lost out to French rival Faurecia. Varroc Engineering, based in Aurangabad, India, will retain its four-wheeler lighting operations in Asia and said it will continue to operate its China joint venture and its other businesses in countries such as Italy, Vietnam, Poland and Romania. Varroc's lighting activities operate as Varroc Lighting Systems, and are based near Detroit in Plymouth, Mich. The company's roots date to the 19th century, and it was part of Ford's Visteon unit until Varroc acquired it in 2012. The divestment is part of Varroc Engineering's strategy to focus on the two-wheeler sector globally and EV product lines, according to the company. The all-cash transaction is expected to close in the second half of this year. Varroc's lighting division lost money in 2021, largely because of underutilized production capacity,





Top AutoMobility Stories

April 2022

Plastic Omnium CEO Laurent Favre said, adding that utilization rates are about 50 percent. Sales were about 800 million euros in 2021, he said. Favre said Plastic Omnium hopes to bring Varroc's lighting activities to a "double digit" EBITDA in two to three years, through better capacity utilization, improved operations and working capital management, and synergies with other units such as front-end modules. "We're very confident we can gain market share and develop the business in coming years," Favre said in an online news conference. He said that Varroc was a leader in lighting for electric vehicles, supplying models such as the Volkswagen ID4, the Renault Megane E-Tech, the Rivian RT1 pickup and the Ford Mach-E. VW Group is Varroc's biggest customer, followed by Ford Motor. The addition of Varroc will complete Plastic Omnium's lighting offer, he said. The Indian supplier specializes in head- and tail lights and turn signals, while Osram's lighting activities center on interior lights and light sources such as LED modules. "It makes a lot of sense to bundle the two activities into one division," he said. Plastic Omnium's other business units include bumpers and tailgates, front-end modules, exteriors and powertrain (including fuel tanks and hydrogen fuel cells). Overall, Favre said, lighting is a growing sector within the automotive business, as automakers add safety, styling and electrification features that increase the lighting content of a vehicle. He said the lighting market would grow at 5 percent a year until 2027, going from 31 billion euros to 42 billion euros. "It's a growing business in a transforming market," he said. Varroc's advantages include factories and R&D centers in low-cost markets such as India, Mexico, Morocco, Poland and the Czech Republic, he said, as well as its focus on electric vehicles and modern – if underutilized – production facilities. It also has many of the same customers as Plastic Omnium, who are eager to see exterior lighting integrated into body panels, a speciality of Plastic Omnium, Favre said. Plastic Omnium, based in Levallois, France, a suburb of Paris, ranked 25th on Automotive News' list of top 100 global suppliers, with automotive sales of \$9.5 billion in 2020. Varroc Lighting Systems ranked 95th, with automotive sales of \$1.2 billion in 2020. *Source: Automotive News*

Valvoline Appoints Jennifer Slater to Board of Directors

Valvoline Inc. has announced the appointment of Jennifer Slater as an independent director to the company's board of directors, effective July 1. The company also announced that Stephen Kirk will retire as a member of the board, effective June 30. With more than 25 years of global multifunctional leadership experience, Slater, who is currently the group vice president and general manager, Global Original Equipment and Products at Clarios, joins the Valvoline Board with extensive knowledge in the automotive industry – most recently focused on energy storage solutions to meet evolving vehicle electrification needs. "On behalf of Valvoline's board of directors, I am thrilled to welcome Jennifer to the board at this exciting time for the company," said Richard J. Freeland, chairman of the board. "Her expertise with automotive OEMs and advanced vehicle market trends will support Valvoline's positioning in the evolving transportation landscape. There is little doubt that Jennifer will be a great asset for our management team and will provide keen insights for our strategic goals. We look forward to having her diverse perspectives as we continue our transformation. "On behalf of the board of directors, I would also like to express our sincere gratitude and thanks to Steve Kirk who, as our former chairman of the board, has been instrumental in leading the company's strategic transformation to a more services-driven business model. Valvoline has greatly benefited from Steve's dedication, strategic thinking and leadership throughout his term on Valvoline's Board of Directors. We will miss Steve's collaboration on the board and wish him all the best in his retirement," said Freeland. Valvoline says it continues to make substantial progress on the previously announced separation of its Global Products and Retail Services business segments and expects to announce further updates when available. *Source: Aftermarket News*

Industry Veteran Mike Buzzard Joins Schwartz Advisors Team

Schwartz Advisors' announced the addition of Mike Buzzard, AAP, to its team of aftermarket experts, effective April 18, 2022. As a partner at the firm, Buzzard will be involved in all three practice areas: advising private equity firms on acquisitions, managing sell side projects, and working on strategic consulting projects. Buzzard brings more than 15 years of aftermarket executive leadership and management experience to the Schwartz Advisors team. He has held leadership roles in marketing, sales management, corporate development and general management during his time with Auto Plus, Uni-Select and MAWDI. Most recently, he served as Vice President, Product Management & Commercial Marketing. Prior to his career at Auto Plus, Mike was an Internal Consulting Services Analyst at JP Morgan. "I'm thrilled to join Schwartz Advisors and bring my years of aftermarket experience and relationships to such a dynamic organization," he said. "The Buzzard name is well known within the motor vehicle aftermarket and we are confident that Mike's broad aftermarket experience will deliver great value to our clients," said Schwartz Advisors' CEO and managing partner Rick Schwartz. Mike is a graduate of Loyola University Maryland and received his MBA from SUNY Buffalo. He earned his Automotive Aftermarket Professional (AAP) designation from the University of the Aftermarket in 2018. *Source: Aftermarket News*

