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Attendance up 20% at 2011 WAS

Consumers throw off recession stress for new vehicle excitement

Shedding the pall of the Great Recession, consumer showgoers turned out to The 2011 Washington Auto Show (WAS) in numbers not seen since 2008, delivering 20% better attendance than predecessor shows of 2009 and 2010. Fortunately, the threat of winter storm systems, which paralyzed the region last year and left many Washingtonians without power the week before last, failed to materialize once The WAS opened to the public on Jan. 28, 2011, to commence its ten-day run through Feb. 6.



2011 WAS crowd, second Saturday



Auto Show fans take in the Cadillac ULC concept

The robust attendance that characterized the first weekend burgeoned over the weekdays, resulting in bell-ringer turnout for the second weekend. Indicators of strong weekend attendance were evident the second Saturday, with exhibitor display managers running out of product literature and show organizers being compelled to “snake” crowds to ticket sales booths.

“We had solid, steady attendance that came through as we hoped it would,” said Bob

Yoffe, WAS manager. “The first weekend brought crowds that kept us fully engaged, but what turned out the second weekend had us as busy managing folks as we’ve ever been,” he said, noting that the weekend picked up appreciably when the forecast of ice and snow didn’t result as predicted by the media.

Promotions and media management is how attendance results, and this year emphasis was placed on significantly expanding social media, internet advertising and use of the WAS website. “Utilizing focus groups and exit surveys on past shows, we came up with a bold, new ad campaign where *Dr. Guy* prescribed the cure for cabin fever afflicting Washingtonians, namely *Get Out, See Cars, Have Fun*,” said Barbara Pomerance, WAS communications & media director. “So creative and original was the campaign that our agency, White + Partners, is up for an ADDY award, which is presented by the American Advertising Federation (AAF), to recognize superlative work,” she said.

There was a sense from exhibitors running the displays that the positive reaction from consumers that dealers have experienced in showrooms was ubiquitous among showgoers. “The atmosphere at this year’s auto show was energetic, if not electrifying, with grander, more colorful OEM exhibits and consumers who were upbeat and enthusiastic about the new products,” said WAS chairman Charles Stringfellow, Brown Automotive. “This auto show is a clear indicator that the recession mentality that has held the car business and everything else down over the past couple of years is at last becoming a bad memory,” he said.

If past is prologue, improved auto show attendance bodes well for improved new vehicle sales over the model year, which in 2011 is generally predicted to rise 10% over the 15% improvement new vehicle sales enjoyed in 2010 versus 2009.

For Congress and public officials, Public Policy Auto Show is a weeklong attraction

The Washington Auto Show’s Public Policy Days may have come and gone, but there was no letup in the draw the show had for Congress and other public officials from around the area. Last Friday, in particular, was a remarkable day, as the head of the Congressional Automotive Caucus and chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Fred Upton (R-MI), and his senior staff toured the WAS exhibit hall for an extended period of time. Rep. Upton paid special attention to the vehicles and future power technologies exhibited in the Advanced Technology SuperHighway, a unique WAS pavilion showcasing a complete array of green vehicles and auto safety innovations. His committee in the House



On the right, Rep. Fred Upton (R-MI), chairman House Energy and Commerce Committee, with Brian Wynn of the Electric Drive Transportation Association (left), with Patrick Calpin of NADA in the background



Above, Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and wife, Marcelle, with Toyota representative, Robert Chiapetta (left)

oversees the agencies that regulate the auto industry on matters of safety, fuel economy and tailpipe emissions, and he has stated that he will be reviewing all these regulations, but especially those affecting pending fuel economy, over the next months.

Rep. Upton was preceded on the second Friday by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH), a champion of the auto industry in the Senate chamber, and Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT), who toured the show with his wife, Marcelle, in search of a “new family vehicle.”



Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) on the left, with Jay Morgan of Ford's Washington office

Earlier in the week, Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) spent several hours at the WAS getting fully briefed by OEM representatives on the new vehicle technology displayed. He was joined on his tour by assistant secretary of energy David Sandalow, who, among other things, oversees research monies the Department of Energy is providing to manufacturers to develop higher mileage cars and trucks.



Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR), right with yellow tie, flanked by David Sandalow (center), assistant secretary of energy, and Gerard Murphy (left), WAS producer, in the Advanced Technology SuperHighway pavilion



Gov. Rick Scott (right) and John O'Donnell, WANADA

Also taking a tour of the show was Florida governor Rick Scott (R), who was in town for other matters, but who dropped by the WAS, he said, to see what was new in the way of clean cars and energy efficient technology.

The Snooki experience comes to the WAS

The celebrity sensation that is “Snooki” (Nicole Polizzi) of *Jersey Shore* fame blew into The Washington Auto Show (WAS) on Monday of last week, Jan. 31, and with her came a throng of adolescent admirers that quickly taxed WAS security staff, ultimately forcing them to cut off the line for fans pursuing her autograph. Thousands queued up to meet the current rage on the pop-star circuit in the three hour window she was on site at The WAS.

The diminutive star of the reality TV series *Jersey Shore* was the grand success for WAS attendees that show organizers had hoped for. And like a true professional, she insisted on greeting and meeting each fan who waited, some as long as three hours.

The Snooki experience was all part of a comprehensive communications strategy show organizers put in place to use national and local celebrities to boost the “fun” quotient of the show for young and old alike.

“We called a press briefing before Snooki’s appearance and garnered solid media attention from wires services, NPR, WSJ and CNN International, which generated coverage of new vehicles displayed at the WAS,” said Barbara Pomerance, director of WAS communications.



TV star “Snooki” (right) meets her twin at the WAS-sponsored look-alike contest on Monday, Jan. 31, as fans line up below



Redskins star Chris Cooley with a young fan

“Why have Snooki at the Auto Show?” The Washington Post asked WAS producer Gerard Murphy. “Snooki brings teenagers whose parents bring them to the show to see cars and have fun,” he said.

Also popular with showgoers were Washington Redskins Chris Cooley and Mike Sellers, who stayed for several hours on Monday, Jan. 31, to sign autographs and have their picture taken with fans. Team members from D.C. United came by earlier in the day to unveil the soccer team’s “third” jersey (a red and black kit with the VW logo on front). Washington Redskins Hall of Famer, Darrell Green, who remains as popular today as in his playing days with



WWE Superstar Big Show® with Auto Show manager Bob Yoffe

the Super Bowl Champions, appeared at the WAS as well. The remarkably large, but gentlemanly, WWE Superstar Big Show,® who stands seven feet tall, weighs in at 485 pounds and wears a size 22 EEEEE shoe, was on hand also, as were the Washington Redskins Cheerleaders, the Latin fusion band, Amarfis y La Banda de Atakke, and the Washington Wizards dance team.

For the kids, Max the Magician was again on hand with his sleight of hand, along with all nine feet of Rock -It the Robot, and the ever popular Dora the Explorer.

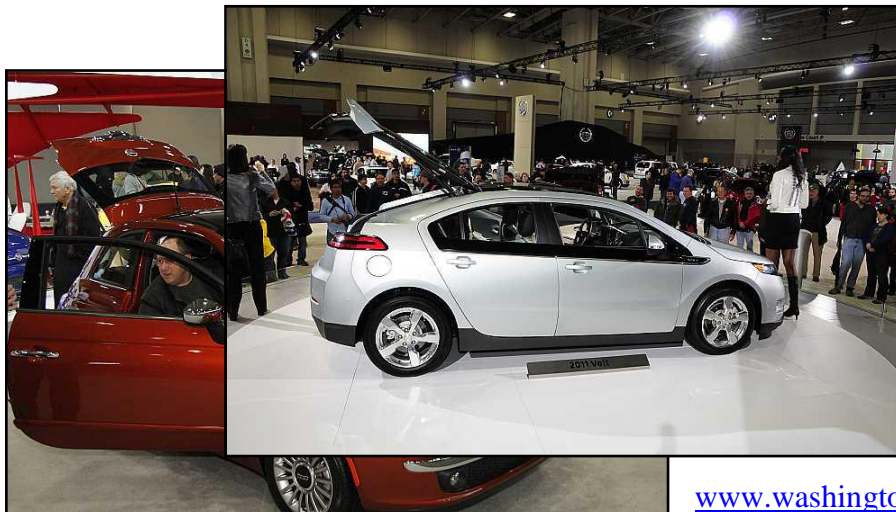
“Along with pop stars like Snooki, we have ball players, wrestlers, racers, soap stars, you name it,” said Murphy. “Our goal is to turn out lots of folks who’ll get turned on to new vehicles, a bunch of whom become car buyers. Celebrities and entertainers help make that happen,” he said.



A young showgoer perusing The WAS program



The 2011 Redskins Cheerleaders



The Fiat 500 (left) and Chevrolet Volt (right), on display at the WAS, are set to arrive in the DC market this spring.

For more on the entertainers and celebrities at The 2011 Washington Auto Show go to

[www.washingtonautoshow.com](http://www.washingtonautoshow.com/public/multimedia/photo-gallery) or click on this link: <http://www.washingtonautoshow.com/public/multimedia/photo-gallery> .

Ride-N-Drive gives Auto Showgoers the total experience

The Washington Auto Show (WAS) ventured headlong into the *ride-n-drive* experience this year as GM, Toyota and Kia Motors provided WAS visitors the opportunity to take in the full line-up of products for a test drive around The Washington Convention Center neighborhood. It's the kind of experience only an auto show can provide, and attendees took full advantage of the chance to test drive the new vehicles on both weekends of the show as lines formed regularly at the OEMs' check-in counters.



WAS attendee sets up for a test drive around DC streets during her visit

Would-be test drivers needed to show only a valid driving permit to give Buick's highly touted 2012 Regal, or Toyota's EV RV4 or Kia's 2012 Optima a ten minute spin around the city, returning impressed with the style, drive quality and overall performance of these new models.

"We are very pleased with the expansion of *ride-n-drive* and are hopeful more manufacturers will offer this experience to showgoers next year," said WAS vice chairman Robert Fogarty (Sport Automotive).

The Washington Auto Show meets the press



WAS producer Gerard Murphy goes live with Fox Morning News during opening day of The Auto Show

When a tier one auto show like The Washington Auto Show (WAS) kicks into high gear, it is inevitable that the local and national press come calling and headlines fill the pages of newspapers, magazines, websites, blogs and news programs, across the cable and broadcast networks. This year's WAS was no exception with both Public Policy Days (Jan. 26-27) heavily covered and subsequent days blogged and tweeted about with regularity.

Monday, Jan. 31, was a particularly busy day in the Facebook and Tweeter world as fans of Snooki from *Jersey Shore*, lit up the social network with

comments from the show floor. The Auto Show's website <http://www.washingtonautoshow.com/> has also seen significant traffic gains as the WAS advertising and marketing program built over the month of January and into the show days.

Among the many media outlets to cover the show were The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, Politico, The Atlantic, Automotive News, Reuters, CNN, NBC Washington (which produced a 30-minute segment from the show hosted by anchor Jim Vance and shown repeatedly on its digital channel) and nationally syndicated Entertainment Tonight.

For all the news coverage on The 2011 Washington Auto Show click on the link:

<http://www.washingtonautoshow.com/media/press-kit/news>.



WAS chairman Charles Stringfellow is interviewed by Politico at the Green Car Summit in the Cannon House Office Bldg., Jan. 26

WANADA dealer business seminars inform members of repair business trends, financial disclosures and the latest motor vehicle regs from DC, MD and VA

WANADA dealer members and staff signed up in number to attend a series of business seminars offered at The Washington Auto Show (WAS) this year as sessions on boosting service department profitability, complying with new federal finance disclosure regulations and the latest developments in tax and title were covered by knowledgeable presenters.

“These dealer operations seminars are always among the most important we offer to members and their personnel each year,” said Gerard Murphy, president of WANADA, “and it doesn’t hurt that they’re held at the Auto Show where attendees also have the opportunity to see the complete gamut of new cars and trucks.”

The seminar on boosting service department profitability was given by Robert Atwood of the NADA Dealer Candidate Academy, who urged dealers to seriously consider extending service hours to at least six days per week and late into the evening as a key to profitability and retained customers. “Today’s car owner just doesn’t have the time to bring his/her vehicle to the dealership during the day,” he said. “Dealers need to be open when it is convenient for the consumer!”

Atwood said that because today’s vehicles are more reliable, dealer service operations were able to focus more on efficiencies in the department, meaning high service shop throughput to offset lower revenue per repair order. “This trend is irreversible,” Atwood said, “and the quicker dealers are to adapt to this reality, the better for them.”



NADA’s Robert Atwood

In the F&I seminar, zeroing in on consumer protection, financial privacy and risk-based pricing, JM&A attorney Todd Clarke delivered some sobering news. The disclosure rules required under the new Finance Reform Law and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) pose a significant risk for dealers who fail to properly present to consumers their finance options and how their vehicle financing is being arranged. “Dealers should not believe that they will be excluded from oversight by the CFPB,” Clarke said, “particularly if they do not provide the proper disclosures required by Finance Reform.” He urged all participants to carefully review their finance and insurance procedures while referencing model disclosure approaches provided by NADA for new and used vehicle purchases.



Area motor vehicle representatives from the left; William Bell, DC DMV; Nancy Joyce, Kathleen Furr, Nadine Donofrio and Tammie Lawson, VA DMV; and Rhonda Witt, MD MVA, at the 2011 WAS DC/MD/VA Motor Vehicle Agency Symposium

Area motor vehicle representatives again provided attendees with all the latest state motor vehicle agency information on changes made in state regulations, particularly those related to print-on-demand tags and requirements regarding electric vehicle and hybrid drive tax credits.

Student Day at the WAS gives local high schoolers an exciting look at the auto industry



As it does each year, The Washington Auto Show (WAS) opened its doors to area high school students last week, providing them with an extensive, real time look at what is new in vehicle design and engineering as well as advertising and marketing in the auto industry. Students were also briefed by members of WANADA’s Automobile Dealer Education Institute (ADEI) on the careers available in the industry, as well as ADEI scholarships available to those interested in pursuing a career in automotive repair.

“Price is Right” for Washington Auto Show visitor

Drives off with brand new 2011 Hyundai Sonata

Reginald Ware of Mitchellville, Maryland was the winner of a brand new 2011 Hyundai Sonata last week, correctly guessing the approximate price of a limited edition model and the expense for travel and lodging to see “The Price is Right” television show in California. The vehicle was made available by The Washington Area Hyundai Dealers.

The drawing to find a winner was held on the final day of The Washington Auto Show, Sunday, Feb. 6. In addition to winning the car, Mr. Ware won tickets to “The Price is Right,” along with the cash inside the vehicle, plus airfare and hotel accommodations in Los Angeles.



WAS chairman Charles Stringfellow presents keys for the 2011 Hyundai Sonata to “Price is Right” winner, Reginald Ware of Mitchellville.

Auto Show “Mystery Shopper” rewards 25 “super sales reps”

Washington Auto Show *mystery shoppers* rewarded a number of dedicated dealership sales representatives working the show, men and women, who exemplified excellence in sales presentation and customer care. For their efforts, each sales rep awardee received \$200 in cash.

The winners were:

Marcelo Via, Herb Gordon Automotive (Mercedes)
 Larry Smith, Don Beyer Volvo
 Phil Katz, Bill Page Honda
 Richard Um, Lindsay Lexus of Alexandria
 Robert Azu, Radley Acura
 Paul Carter, Martens Volvo
 Tom Schweiss, Tischer Audi of Silver Spring
 Paul Fitzner, Jaguar Land Rover of West Columbia
 Bob Slattery, Mercedes Benz of Chantilly
 Ray Jacobs, Alexandria Hyundai
 Kathleen Dallas, Rosner Volvo of Fredericksburg
 Tim Ellis, Mini of Alexandria
 Shane Tabit, Pohanka Lexus
 Seth Hamm, Lexus of Rockville



Kenneth Hahm of Mercedes Benz, Tysons Corner (left) and John O'Donnell of WANADA

Kenneth Hahm, Mercedes Benz of Tysons Corner
Larry Pinto, Rosenthal Acura
Tate Attia, Pohanka Lexus
Julian Pollidore, Sport Honda
Wallace Rumbarger, Smart Center Tysons Corner
Zola Javzmaa, Mini of Sterling
Roberto Piediscalzi, Rosenthal Jaguar Land Rover
Don Bennett, Sheehy Honda
Richard Praml, Pohanka Acura
Bryan Boone, Alexandria Hyundai
Daniel Feagans, Audi Chantilly

Photos of all the winners are available at:

<http://www.photoresponse.com/was/mysteryshopper/index.htm>

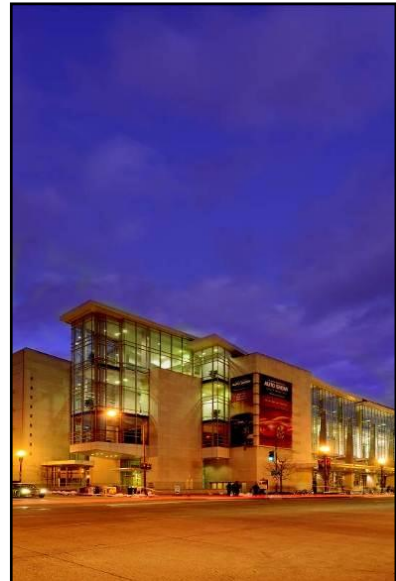
A special “thank you” to The Washington Auto Show Team and its sponsors

Anything as multifaceted as a major auto show has a myriad of moving parts, and this year’s was especially challenging as The Washington Auto Show (WAS) became a ten day event, yielding two weekends, preceded by two industry media days (one of which was The Green Car Summit on Capitol Hill).

In addition to WAS chairman Charles Stringfellow, Brown Automotive, the Auto Show Committee consisted of: Robert Fogarty, Sport Automotive; Daniel Jobe, Capitol Cadillac; Kevin Reilly, Alexandria Hyundai; Mark Zetlin, American Service Center and George Doetsch *ex officio*, WANADA chairman, Apple Ford.

WANADA staff engaged in the planning and “on the ground” during the 2011 WAS were: Gerard Murphy, WANADA president and WAS producer; John O’Donnell, WANADA executive vice president; Barbara Pomerance, Pomerance and Associates, communications & media; Bob Yoffe, Yoffe Exposition Services, show manager; Isabel Garcia, WANADA vice president and WAS IT coordinator; Jake Kelderman, WANADA communications; Trish Frisbee, WANADA leadership coordinator; Kristina Henry, WANADA event planner and Ralph Frisbee, WANADA member relations.

WANADA is also grateful to industry association stakeholder organizations, which assisted mightily with the planning and execution of Public Policy Days and the Sneak Peek Preview prior to the show opening: The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers; the Global Automakers Association; NADA, AIADA, NAMAD, EDTA, and SAE International.



Walter E. Washington
Convention Center, site of
The 2011 Washington Auto
Show

WANADA, correspondingly, is grateful to major sponsors of the WAS, to include:

Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers
AutoTrader.com
Comcast Spotlight
D.C. United
Electric Drive Transportation Association (EDTA)
Global Automakers Association
Hargrove
NADA
SAE International
Volkswagen Group of America
Washington Area Hyundai Dealers

Automotive News
Bosch Diesel Systems
DC Lottery
Department of Energy
Environmental Protection Agency
Green Car Journal
MEMA
Novozymes
Scuderia Engines
Washington Automotive Press Association

Thanks, too, to program emcees and program moderators Warren Brown, automotive columnist, The Washington Post; Keith Crain, editor-in-chief, Automotive News; and Ron Cogan, publisher, The Green Car Journal.



FOR MORE PHOTOS OF ALL THE EVENTS AT THE 2011 WASHINGTON AUTO SHOW VISIT:
[HTTP://WASHINGTONAUTOSHOW.COM/PUBLIC/MULTIMEDIA/PHOTO-GALLERY](http://WASHINGTONAUTOSHOW.COM/PUBLIC/MULTIMEDIA/PHOTO-GALLERY)

Thought for the week...

This much is clear from this year's Washington DC Auto Show: these days you don't have to sacrifice fuel economy for style.

--The Atlantic Magazine