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President's historic visit to The Washington Auto Show perfects Public Policy Show mission and capstones the best attendance in four years

No, it wasn't just Auto Show Tuesday last week when the president of the United States came by to see the latest and greatest new vehicles at The Washington Auto Show (WAS). Indeed, the president's visit was preceded by days, literally, of thorough and painstaking planning with the White House advance team with security, of course, the foremost concern. A close second to security was what cars the president wanted to see and, if they were not already in the Advanced Technology SuperHighway (ATS) pavilion, could they be added? Yes sir, Mr. President,



President Obama with GM design chief Ed Welburn (center) and WAS producer Gerard Murphy at The 2012 Washington Auto Show



whatever you'd like to see. That's how "muscle cars," the likes of the Ford Cobra Mustang 500, the Dodge SRT Charger and the Corvette Z3, found their way next to the variety of cutting edge alternative fuel vehicles in the ATS.

Pictured left, the WCC Mt. Vernon Square entrance foyer filled with ticket buyers on the first WAS Saturday. Show attendance for the 10-day run reached pre-recession, record levels.



The Ford Fusion Concept car draws a crowd at The 2012 Washington Auto Show

“And do it we did,” said WAS manager Bob Yoffe, referencing several days of intense interaction with the president’s handlers that ultimately resulted in the visit. “As things finalized, the White House sent word they wanted to see eight specific vehicles which we set up with eight OEMs. That changed to twelve vehicles from three OEMs, which we promptly arranged,” said Yoffe.

President Obama arrived with his extensive entourage at about 2:15 pm, Jan 31, with the show open to the public. And with the oohs and aahs of any ordinary show visitor, the leader of the free world was in and out of a number of the vehicles catching his fancy, making his penchant for “muscle cars” plain to show organizers and product specialists.



“Crowds were large, consistent, and enthusiastic about the new vehicles and advanced technology at this year’s show here in Washington.”

--Bob Yoffe, WAS manager

President Obama’s visit touched off a frenzy of media coverage that went as deep as the late night shows, exemplified by Jay Leno’s skit on the president crashing a car while touring the auto show. The president’s visit not only brought attention to The Washington Auto Show as a major stop on the global industry circuit, but also to the fact that the auto business in the U.S. is *back* and driving the economy.

“The president coming to the auto show is proof positive of The Washington Auto Show’s status as a tier-one industry event, and we’re delighted he used our venue to make the case for the



recovery in our industry,” said Robert Fogarty, WAS chairman of Sport Automotive. And the president did just that, telling the White House press corps, which he had in tow, that a resurgent automobile industry not only bodes well for the American economy, but the world economy at large.

No doubt the president’s visit also sparked a boost in attendance at this year’s show, although indicators from the first Auto Show weekend documented that consumers were there in high number, likely due to their heightened interest in new cars. Overall, attendance at the 10-day 2012 WAS was nearly 15% improved over 2011. “We clearly succeeded in tapping consumer interest in new vehicles like we’ve experienced of late in dealerships and is forecast to continue for the balance of this year,” Fogarty said. Indeed, Washington Auto Show attendance reached pre-recession levels of four years ago, Fogarty added.

The Auto Show used a new tagline in its advertising campaign this year, “750,000 Square Feet of Pure Car Love,” which was designed to remind consumers that buying a new vehicle is still one of life’s great pleasures. As was the case last year, emphasis was placed on significantly expanding social media, Internet advertising and use of the WAS website to deliver the key message.

“We had high hopes for our communications strategy this year, and we hit pay dirt,” said Barbara Pomerance, WAS communications & media director. “What the exhibitors were telling us was that the atmosphere at this year’s auto show brimmed with visitor enthusiasm for the new products and 21st century design,” Pomerance said, “and that suggests vehicle sales in this market are going to be strong this year.”

***Dancing with the Stars* winner J.R. Martinez heads celebrity lineup at WAS “Honor the Military Day”**



J.R. Martinez in the Toyota exhibit with a fan during “Honor the Military Day” at The Washington Auto Show

In addition to welcoming the president, The Washington Auto Show (WAS) also took time this year to recognize the many active and retired military in the region for their service with free attendance to the show for them and their families on “Honor the Military Day,” Tuesday, Jan. 31, 2012. The day presented an unprecedented opportunity for WAS exhibitor OEMs to communicate their car buyer incentives and career programs to military attendees at the show. The day culminated in a special reception and appearance by Iraq war veteran and *Dancing with the Stars* celebrity, J.R. Martinez. At the same evening event,

Martinez appeared with former U.S. Marine drill sergeant and WWE Legend Sergeant Slaughter. The U.S. Army’s *Downrange Band* played at the reception, which also featured sweets from the ever popular Georgetown Cupcake. The “Honor the Military Day” evening activities were supported by the USO and the Washington Area Toyota Dealers.

Martinez spoke meaningfully about his military experience and struggles to recover from his war injuries as well as offering advice to those leaving the military on how they might best continue to serve. “My new weapons are my words, my new uniform is my scar, which is how I will continue to serve,” Martinez said. “This is what we all have to think about when we come home to this great country,” he said.

Both Martinez and Slaughter also work with new recruits and troops on the purpose, duty, and high honor of military service.



The Army's Downrange Band

Members of Congress and public officials are also fans of the Auto Show

The 2012 Washington Auto Show (WAS) may be designed to bring automotive buying fever to would-be buyers in the region, but members of Congress and federal officials aren't immune to its draw either, as was evidenced by the steady stream of visits by them over the course of the show's run, Jan. 27 through Feb. 5.

On Tuesday of last week (Jan. 31), for example, Rep. John Lewis (D-GA) the senior Democrat on the House Ways and Means Committee, came by to meet with the several import automakers who have manufacturing plants in Georgia and also to shake hands with the veterans participating in the WAS “Honor the Military” activities. He was followed later in the week by Rep. Mary

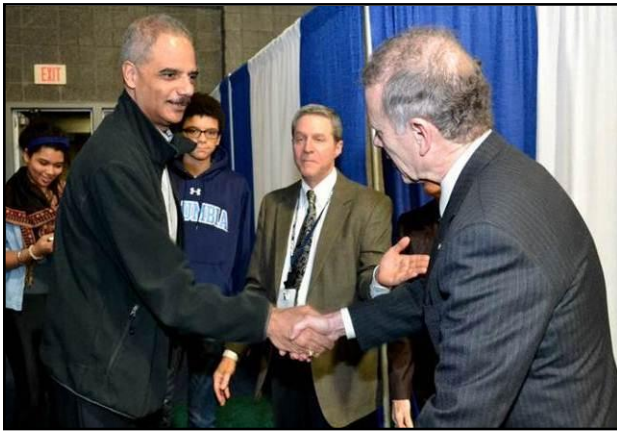


On the left, Rep. John Lewis (D-GA) tours the Auto Show with Washington Post automotive writer Warren Brown



Bono Mack (R-CA) who sits on the House Energy and Commerce Committee that oversees fuel economy regulations. Rep. Lewis was preceded by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), and Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN). Days prior to their tours of the Auto Show, Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR) spent several hours at the WAS getting fully briefed by OEM product specialists on the new vehicle technology that was omnipresent on display. Merkley was joined on his tour by

Rep. Mary Bono Mack (R-CA) is briefed by Ford's Peter Arapis on the new Explorer



assistant secretary of energy David Sandalow, who, among other things, oversees research monies the Department of Energy is providing to OEMs to develop higher mileage cars and trucks. U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder stopped by the show (unofficially) with his family.

Attorney General Eric Holder (L) who was by the show is greeted by WAS producer Gerard Murphy (R) and WAS manager Bob Yoffe (center)

Ride-n-Drive experience goes indoor and out for 2012 Auto Showgoers



WAS attendees line up for a test drive at FIAT's indoor test track

The Washington Auto Show (WAS) continued to build on the *Ride-n-Drive* experience this year as Cadillac, Toyota, Kia, VW and FIAT provided WAS visitors the opportunity to take in the full line-up of products for test drives in and around the Washington Convention Center. It's the kind of activity only an auto show can provide, and attendees took full advantage of the chance to test drive the new vehicles as lines formed daily at the OEMs' check-in counters.

For those interested in FIAT's new 500 model, that line was on the lower level of the Convention Center where the company had laid out a complete *indoor* test track designed to show off the small car's versatility in tight quarters, simulating the city driving scene for which it was primarily designed. Outside, would-be test drivers needed to show only a valid driving permit to give Cadillac's potent new CTS models, Toyota's all-new Camry, VW's new Jetta and Passat models, or Kia's full line, a ten minute spin around the city, returning impressed with the style, driveability and overall performance of these new products.

"The *Ride-n-Drive* experience is a great add-on to the whole Auto Show experience and we're hopeful more manufacturers will opt to offer it for showgoers next year," said WAS manager Bob Yoffe, who regularly monitored the test drives.





Toyota, Kia and VW brought their entire line-up of cars, trucks and SUVs for showgoers to test drive

Howard University wins “Cram the (Nissan) Cube” contest

Fourteen determined Howard University students won the Nissan “Cram the Cube” contest at The 2012 Washington Auto Show (WAS) last week, twisting and contorting themselves to fit into the novel CUV. George Washington University's team came in a close second, with 13 students packed into the vehicle. It was less of a squeeze for American University's group of seven students. The three teams also combined forces, ultimately jamming 20 students into the Cube.



Vince Sheehy of WANADA served as the MC for the event and was supported by Steve Roman, a product specialist, who described to describe the "normal five person seating capacity" of the Cube.



Howard University student winners with WANADA’s Vince Sheehy, (kneeling lower right) and Nissan’s Steve Roman, (front)

The event spotlighted WAS "Student Day," Feb 1, which offered half-priced admission for all those with a valid college ID and free admission to area high school students in auto technical education.

As the winning team in the Cube Contest, Howard University students each earned \$25 apiece in iTunes gift cards, Nissan caps and a group pizza party at Finn & Porter, located at the Embassy Suites Convention Center Hotel. All other participating students each received a \$10 iTunes gift card and a ticket to return to the Auto Show.

And...There was plenty of fun for the little kids too!



SAE International holds “Annual Government/industry Meeting” at The 2012 Washington Auto Show

SAE International, the global association of more than 134,000 engineers and technical experts in automotive, aerospace and commercial-vehicle industries, again held its Annual Government/Industry Meeting during Public Policy Days (Jan. 25-26) at The 2012 Washington Auto Show.

The meeting, which drew auto design professionals and industry observers from around the world, featured presentations by David Strickland, administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration; Phil Gott, director of IHS Automotive; Henry Kelly, assistant secretary for energy efficiency, Department of Energy; and David Shepardson, Washington bureau chief of the Detroit News.

The plenary Session panel featured a distinguished panel (pictured below) on Thursday, Jan. 26, dealing with the provocative subject: *Are U.S. CAFE standards between now and 2025 regulatory overreach or reasonably scheduled fuel economy goals?*



SAE Plenary Session panel on CAFE

From the left: Jason Vines, moderator; Mitch Bainwol, Auto Alliance; Heather Zichal, the White House; Roland Hwang, NRDC; Adrian Lund, IIHS; Ron Medford, NHTSA; Margo Oge, EPA; and David Sargent, J.D. Power & Associates

Media coverage abounds at 2012 Washington Auto Show

Press coverage of The 2012 Washington Auto Show was highlighted by national network coverage of President Obama’s tour of the Advanced Technology SuperHighway pavilion and the presentations by senior administration officials, including DOT Secretary Ray LaHood and DOE Deputy Secretary David Sandalow, along with notable OEM presenters, including Dave Zuchowski, EVP Hyundai/NA; Jonathan Browning, president, VWoA; Mark Reuss, president GM/NA; Reid Bigland, president Dodge/NA; and Ralph Gilles, president, SRT. There was also plenty of regional media coverage as well. Indeed, it was a multi-lingual affair with news operations from Spanish language and Japanese and Chinese networks also covering the show.



Clockwise from upper left: WAS producer Gerard Murphy (R) with Fox News; DOT Secretary Ray LaHood (L) fielding questions from the national media following his opening of the Advanced Technology SuperHighway; Dave Zuchowski, EVP, Hyundai/NA briefing reporters; Reid Bigland, president, Dodge/NA with President Obama; Isabel Garcia, WANADA VP for finance and Spanish language spokesperson, being interviewed by Univision (center); and Kevin Reilly, assistant WAS chairman (above) with the local NBC affiliate.



“Doing right” pays off for “Price is Right” winner at The Washington Auto Show

Germantown, MD resident drives off with brand new Hyundai Sonata



Jvandia Brown of Germantown with her new 2012 Hyundai Sonata

Jvandia Brown of Germantown, Maryland was the winner of a new 2012 Hyundai Sonata on closing day at The Washington Auto Show (WAS), for correctly guessing the price of a *Limited Edition* model and travel expenses to see “The Price is Right” television show in California.

Ms. Brown’s New Year’s resolution was to “do right” by people by doing three good deeds each month, which she had followed by returning a lost purse, buying lunch for two young boys short of money and giving money to the

homeless in January. On Sunday, Feb.5, while attending the WAS, she “reaped what she sowed.” In addition to winning the Sonata, Ms. Brown won tickets to “The Price is Right,” along with cash inside the vehicle and travel to Los Angeles to attend the show.

The 2012 Hyundai Sonata *Limited Edition* was made available by the Washington Area Hyundai Dealers and promoted by WUSA9.

Auto Show “Mystery Shopper” rewards 21 “effective sales reps” from area dealerships

Washington Auto Show *Mystery Shopper* monitor rewarded a number of dedicated dealership sales representatives for plying their trade successfully with attendees at the show. For their efforts, each sales rep awardee received \$200 in cash.

The 21 winners were as follows:

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|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Robert Azu | Karen Radley Acura |
| Dimitrios Balourdos | Mercedes-Benz of Alexandria |
| Joseph Borak | Lindsay Volkswagen of Dulles |
| Itsvan (Steve) Burger | MINI of Sterling |
| Nate Chappelle | Tischer Acura Nissan |
| Abdullah Dehlavi | Karen Radley Acura |
| John Dow | Karen Radley Acura |
| Frank Elizondo | Jaguar Land Rover Annapolis |
| Kevin Flores | Hendrick Honda |
| Frank Fowler | MINI of Montgomery County |
| Ellis Scott Frison III | Alexandria Hyundai |
| Neal Hyman | Herb Gordon Volvo |



WAS Chairman Robert Fogarty (R) with *Mystery Shopper* awardee Qui Nguyen of Pohanka Lexus

Chris Lee	MINI of Montgomery County
Amir Malik	Mercedes-Benz of Arlington
Qui Nguyen	Pohanka Lexus
Wisdom K. Owusu	Karen Radley Acura
Larry Pinto	Rosenthal Acura
Slodobanka (Boba) Radulovic	Rosner Mercedes-Benz of Fredericksburg
Ron Samuels	Don Beyer Volvo
Clark Speaker	Fairfax Imports
Harry Vannie	Lindsay Volkswagen of Dulles

Photos of all the winners are available by clicking this [link](#).

WANADA dealer business seminars inform dealers on the latest rules of engagement in union organizing and motor vehicle sales in 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). Session subject matter covered new rules from the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) governing unionization, while another member session covered developments in tag and title administration from area motor vehicle agency regulators in DC, Maryland and Virginia.

“These dealer operations seminars are among the most important we offer dealer managers each year,” said Gerard Murphy, president of WANADA. “The Auto Show is a great setting for holding these sessions because it gives attendees an opportunity to see what everyone else is selling.”



Stephen Shawe, Esq., explains the new NLRB poster requirements of the NLRB union election rules

The seminar on new NLRB rules presented by Stephen Shawe, of Shawe/Rosenthal LLP dealt extensively with the implications of, and strategies for, complying with the law that has been changed to make it easier for unions to organize in retail business organizations.

The new rules, which take effect April 30, 2012, specify that the period between filing of a union petition and the NLRB election is reduced to 42 days; that there can be no pre-election litigation,

or appeals; and that employers must display a new NLRB poster notifying employees of their right to select a union as their bargaining agent.

“This is a very different ball game,” Shawe told the attendees, “and it is critical that dealers are prepared for the new rules of the road.”

Area motor vehicle representatives again provided dealership attendees, in a standing room only audience, with all the latest motor vehicle agency information on changes made in state regulations. Specifically, reference was made to print-on-demand tags and requirements, document fee changes, requirements regarding insurance coverage, and title issuance.



The 2012 WAS DC/MD/VA Motor Vehicle Agency Symposium

Area motor vehicle representatives from the left, Kenneth King, Tyrina Gordon and Eawanda Allen-Comer, DC DMV; Brenda Scheydt, Kevin Gamble and Yolanda Fleming, MD MVA; and Nadine Donofrio, Tammie Lawson, and Fran Kelly, VA DMV

FOR MORE PHOTOS OF ALL THE EVENTS AT THE 2012 WASHINGTON AUTO SHOW CLICK [HERE](#)

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 Washington Auto Show (WAS) was especially challenging with two weekends, preceded by two industry/media days, one of which was produced by The National Journal in the form of symposium panels, which took place on Capitol Hill. (The Auto Industry’s Role in the Green Economy)



Walter E. Washington Convention Center, site of
The 2012 Washington Auto Show

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

WANADA staff engaged in planning and “on the ground” logistics during the 2012 WAS were: Gerard Murphy, WAS producer and WANADA CEO; John O’Donnell, WANADA executive vice president; Barbara Pomerance and Rachel Pomerance, Pomerance and Associates, communications & media; Bob Yoffe, Yoffe Exposition Services, show manager; Isabel Garcia, WAS IT coordinator and WANADA finances; Kristina Henry, WANADA event planner; Jake Kelderman, WANADA communications; Trish Frisbee, WANADA leadership relations; Ralph Frisbee, The Auto Show Program; Bonnie Moret, press room manager; and Immanuel Garcia, WAS website.

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: Auto Alliance; the Global Automakers, NADA, AIADA, NAMAD and SAE International. WANADA, correspondingly, is grateful to major sponsors of the WAS, to include:

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|-----------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Auto Alliance | Automotive News | AutoTrader.com |
| Bosch Diesel Systems | Chrysler SRT | Department of Energy |
| Environmental Protection Agency | Global Automakers | Green Car Journal |
| Hargrove | NADA | SAE International |
| Washington Area Hyundai Dealers | | Washington Area Toyota Dealers |
| Washington Automotive Press Association | | |

Thought for the week...

It's good to remember the fact that there were some folks who were willing to let this industry die. ... I'm just very proud of what we're seeing here today.

--President Obama at The Washington Auto Show, Jan. 31, 2012