

THE WANADA® BULLETIN

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR AND ABOUT FRANCHISED NEW CAR DEALERS IN THE WASHINGTON AREA

WANADA Bulletin # 02-23

February 1, 2023

The 2023 Washington, DC Auto Show Exceeds All Expectations
Geoff Pohanka Formally Takes Reins at NADA
John Altman Nominated for TIME Dealer of the Year

The 2023 Washington, DC Auto Show Exceeds All Expectations

On Sunday, the 2023 Washington, DC Auto Show concluded after a landmark year and full return to pre-pandemic levels of attendance and consumer engagement.

“This show exceeded every expectation,” said WANADA CEO John O’Donnell. “We knew we would be better than 2022, which had a lot of COVID-related headwinds, but we didn’t expect to get back to where we were before the pandemic. We’re back...and more!”

The show began with its annual “Public Policy Day” on Thursday, January 19. Kicking off the proceedings was Senator Tom Carper (D-DE), who chairs the important Environment & Public Works Committee. As a leading voice in policymaking that affects the automobile business, Sen. Carper shared many of his insights about the impact of recent legislation like the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and more.



Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) kicks off Public Policy Day

Following the senator’s welcoming remarks, several manufacturers introduced or showcased new models. Toyota started off the OEMs by introducing the 2023 Prius to the East Coast. The newly redesigned Prius, complete with plug-in charging capabilities, was subsequently made a prominent feature in Toyota’s exhibit. Next, Lamborghini unveiled their all-new Urus Performante, the first model of its kind on American shores. Third, Bentley took its turn by showcasing the newly extended Bentayga SUV. The Prius, Urus Performante, and Bentayga “EWB” (extended wheelbase) turned lots of heads and had the assembled members of the media scrambling for the best photos. Rounding out the product portion of the Policy Day programming, U.S. News & World Report delivered their annual “Best Cars for the Money” awards.

Other notable Public Policy Day speakers included Gabe Klein, Executive Director of the Joint Office for Energy and Transportation, Michael Berube, Deputy Asst. Secretary of the Department of Energy (DOE), Andrew Mayock, Federal Chief Sustainability Officer,



(left) Crowds gather in droves during the opening weekend of the auto show; (right) Washington, DC Auto Show Chairman Jamie Darvish of DARCARS welcomes WANADA members to the Member Reception on Thursday, Jan. 19.

Ambassador of the European Union to the United States Stavros Lambrinidis, and Nikola Motors CEO Michael Lohscheller.

Following Public Policy Day, the WANADA Member Reception was held concurrent with the show's annual Sneak Peek Preview. This year's reception was a hit, with many dealers and kindred line members taking the opportunity to take in some of the policy programming and check out all the new models on display. The 2023 Member Reception was sponsored by BG Crovato Products & Services and The Kirvan, Pierce, Sweeney Group.

On Friday, January 20, the auto show opened to the public. And throughout the weekend the public showed up in droves. Saturday and Sunday were characterized by huge crowds, with many exhibitors reporting that lead goals were exceeded each and every day. The ride & drives, both outdoor and indoor, were full the whole weekend, as were the special feature areas like the all-new Commercial Truck Zone and Get Outdoors Pavilion.

Another highlight of the weekend was the Hyundai Hands-On Hope contest. Six contestants, drawn from the pediatric cancer units at Georgetown Lombardi and Children's National, maintained physical contact with a brand new Hyundai IONIQ5 for 44 hours to have a chance to win the car for themselves and a \$60,000 research grant for their institution. The runner-up institution would not be left in the cold, of course, as they would then receive a \$40,000 donation from Hyundai, for a total contribution of \$100,000 to fight pediatric cancer. The winner, Jeffrey Petro from Georgetown Lombardi, was understandably thrilled to be the new owner of such a highly prized new car.



Kevin Reilly from Alexandria Hyundai celebrates with Jeff Petro of Georgetown Lombardi Hospital, who won the 2023 Hyundai Hands-On Hope contest.

In addition to the fun atmosphere, beautiful surroundings, and hundreds of new cars, The Washington, DC Auto Show also offers several additional activities for WANADA members. The Tag & Title seminar, which was held on Tuesday, January 24, featured motor vehicle agency regulators from DC/DMV, Maryland/MVA and Virginia/DMV discussing the special tag and title issues facing Washington Area dealers. The seminar was attended by over 40 area tag & title processors from WANADA dealerships and focused on proper document processing, inter-jurisdictional coordination and administrative efforts.



(left) Local auto tech students visit with area dealers at Career Day; (right) Over 40 dealership employees attended the Tag & Title seminar.

Another feature of the 2023 show was a reinvigorated Career Day where area high school auto technology students gathered at the convention center to learn about all of the career opportunities available at new car dealerships. Speakers included WANADA's Director of Education Joe Hemberger discussing WANADA's [ADEI technician training program](#), Chris Peterson from Toyota, and Farzad Makarehchi from DARCARS.

Following Career Day, one of the highlights of the entire show materialized when Department of Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm and White House National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi came by for a joint visit. Stopping first on the street to take turns driving a Ford F-150 Lightning and Chevy Bolt, Secretary Granholm and NCA Zaidi then made their way to the show's EV Pavilion to personally review lots of the electrified products that the manufacturers were featuring at the show.



(from left): 2024 Auto Show Chairman Bob Biagi (Ourisman of VA); John Bozzella, CEO, Alliance for Automotive Innovation; National Climate Advisor Ali Zaidi; Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm; 2023 Auto Show Chairman Jamie Darvish (DARCARS); WANADA CEO John O'Donnell.

"All these companies announcing they are locating now in the United States,"

Granholm told Reuters. "It's electric vehicles, it's the guts to the electric vehicle, it's the guts to the battery - the whole supply chain now locating in the United States."

Sec. Granholm and NCA Zaidi met with product specialists from Ford, General Motors, Hyundai, Nissan, Subaru and Toyota as they reviewed eight different models that had been gathered for the occasion. "We literally influenced the classification of vehicles that receive credits under IRA, then had the two of the most important policymakers to our industry stop by and review product for an hour," said O'Donnell. "We are one of the strongest markets in the entire country, *and* we help influence decisions on the highest levels. This is why we are one of the strongest and most important auto shows in the world."

Geoff Pohanka Formally Takes Reins at NADA

From [NADA](#): During his first address to America's franchised auto dealers, 2023 NADA Chairman Geoffrey Pohanka stressed that new-car "dealers and their OEMs essentially want the same things: to give customers a great buying experience and to sell a lot of cars and trucks."

Pohanka, a third-generation dealer who serves as chairman of the Pohanka Automotive Group in Capitol Heights, Md., added that "we don't always agree on how do that," noting that "OEMs often don't understand how complex it is to sell a car.... Sometimes we have to remind our legacy OEMs that dealers are their competitive advantage."



to

"It is good for dealers and the manufacturers that there are buzzes in our industry," Pohanka said. "Electric vehicles, autonomous cars and new power sources such as hydrogen. These cars are new. They're exciting. They give people a reason to go out and buy a new car."

Pohanka went on to tout the value of the franchise model to automakers and consumers alike. "Dealers' opposition to the direct sellers is not about EVs...our opposition is that we know the franchise system is the best way to sell cars and take care of customers."

In light of higher-than-average inflation and increased interest rates, Pohanka also addressed vehicle affordability and the importance of attainable federal and state fuel and emissions mandates. "Affordability is an issue for consumers... The EV revolution isn't only fueled by consumer demand. It's also drive by federal and state fuel economy and emissions mandates. These new regulations are significant; they're also very difficult for OEMs to meet."

"The rising cost of commodities required to manufacture batteries is making EVs less affordable," added Pohanka. "If consumers are priced out of the market, their only option is to

buy a used car or keep the old one. And that's not good for the economy, the environment, or for public safety."

To move dealers into the next generation in the auto retail evolution, Pohanka urged dealers "get more involved at the local, state, and national level. It's truly time to stand up and be counted."

John Altman Nominated for TIME Dealer of the Year



WANADA was proud to select John Altman of the Beyer Auto Group as its 2023 nominee for the TIME Dealer of the Year award. Altman is one of a select group of 48 dealer nominees from across the country who were honored at the 106th annual National Automobile Dealers Association (NADA) Show in Dallas, Texas, on January 27, 2023.

The TIME Dealer of the Year award is one of the automobile industry's most prestigious and highly coveted honors. The award recognizes the nation's most successful auto dealers who also demonstrate a long-standing commitment to community service.

"I am extremely grateful for the wonderful opportunity I have been given by my family, who started this business in 1973," nominee Altman said. "To this day, as the head of the group, I still work to earn the right to have this job and lead our team. And the harder I work, the more I love what I do."

An active member in WANADA, Altman has served on the board of directors since 2016 and was named treasurer in 2021 and secretary in 2022. He is also director of the association's Automobile Dealer Education Institute, which invests in training and educational programs to bring young people into the auto industry.

"Trade associations are critical to the future of our industry," Altman said. "With so many threats to our business model, these organizations need to be supported so they have the resources to fight for our livelihood."

The WANADA Bulletin is Sponsored by the Following Kindred-Line Members:



