

Looking Back at the 2026 NADA Show
Hyundai Hands on Hope Goes Viral
Virginia Motor Vehicle Dealer Board Welcomes New Director
WANADA in Annapolis
January DC Auto Sales Report
Maryland MVA Updates
WRAP Celebrates Successful SoberRide Super Bowl Campaign

Looking Back at the 2026 NADA Show

The 2026 NADA Show in Las Vegas once again delivered a powerful mix of celebration, connection, and forward-looking insight for franchised dealers across the country—and WANADA members were prominently featured throughout the event.

One of the proudest moments for the Washington-area dealer community was the national recognition of Melanie Funkhouser of Fair Oaks Chrysler Jeep Dodge RAM, who was honored as WANADA's 2026 TIME Dealer of the Year nominee. Melanie's selection reflects not only her professional excellence as a dealer principal, but also her deep commitment to community service and leadership. WANADA was honored to celebrate her achievement alongside colleagues and peers on the national stage, underscoring the caliber of dealers serving our region.



WANADA once again partnered with the Virginia Automobile Dealers Association (VADA) and the Maryland Automobile Dealers Association (MADA) to host the annual Tri-Association Reception, held this year at The Wynn Las Vegas. The event was exceptionally well attended, bringing together dealers, OEM representatives, and industry partners from across the Mid-Atlantic region.

The reception continues to be a highlight of the NADA Show—offering a valuable opportunity to strengthen regional relationships, share insights, and reinforce the collaborative spirit that defines our three associations. The strong turnout was a testament to the engagement and momentum of dealers from Virginia, Maryland, and the District.

Beyond the celebrations, the 2026 NADA Show delivered important signals about where the industry is headed—many of which carry direct relevance for WANADA members:

- **Affordability and Inventory Balance:** Dealers and OEMs alike emphasized the need to restore balance between pricing, incentives, and inventory levels as consumers remain highly payment-sensitive. Many sessions focused on disciplined inventory strategies rather than volume-at-all-costs growth.
- **Fixed Operations as a Profit Anchor:** With variable margins under pressure, fixed operations—particularly service retention, technician recruitment, and productivity—were highlighted as critical to long-term dealership stability.
- **Technology with Purpose:** While AI and automation remain buzzworthy, the prevailing message was practical implementation. Dealers are increasingly focused on technologies that measurably improve efficiency, customer experience, and compliance, rather than adopting tools for novelty alone.
- **Workforce Development:** Talent shortages, especially among technicians, continue to challenge the industry. Education, apprenticeships, and culture-building were recurring themes, reinforcing the importance of long-term workforce investment.



(Clockwise, from top left): WANADA CEO John O'Donnell and WANADA Chairman John Altman of Beyer Auto Group; Cory & Melanie Funkhouser with Jim Gramm, his wife Donna and daughter Nicole; John O'Donnell with MADA Chairman Sam Weaver (Chevy Chase Cars), NADA Director Geoff Pohanka (Pohanka Automotive) and John Altman; WANADA VP of Operations Joe Koch with Mike & Holly Johansen and Rob Smith, President of Fitzgerald Auto Malls.

The 2026 NADA Show reaffirmed that despite ongoing economic and regulatory pressures, franchised dealers remain resilient, adaptive, and well-positioned to lead the future of automotive retail. WANADA members once again demonstrated leadership—locally, regionally, and nationally.

We look forward to carrying the momentum from Las Vegas into the year ahead and continuing to support our members with advocacy, education, and opportunities to connect.

Hyundai Hands-On Hope Contest Goes Viral

One of the most inspiring and buzzworthy highlights of the Washington, DC Auto Show closing weekend was the Hyundai HandsOn Hope Contest, part of the Hyundai Hope on Wheels initiative to support pediatric cancer research. After an intense 44-hour endurance challenge, Siobhan Copeland of Children's National Hospital emerged as the winner, taking home a new 2026 Hyundai Palisade Hybrid and securing a \$60,000 research grant for her institution, while Georgetown University Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center received a \$40,000 grant, bringing the total awarded at the event to \$100,000.



Children's National Contestants pose with the winning check with representatives from the hospital and Kevin Reilly, President of Alexandria Hyundai.

The contest also captured widespread public attention on social media thanks to contestant Rose Haley, whose TikTok account created to document her Hands-On Hope experience went viral, with several videos surpassing 1 million views and helping amplify nationwide awareness of the cause. This blend of community engagement, charitable impact, and digital-era storytelling

underscored the Auto Show's role not only as an automotive showcase, but as a platform for meaningful local and regional impact.

Virginia Motor Vehicle Dealer Board Welcomes New Director

WANADA is honored to welcome Kelley Smith as the new Executive Director of the Virginia Motor Vehicle Dealer Board. Kelley brings more than a decade of leadership experience in administrative law, professional licensing, and regulatory policy within the Commonwealth of Virginia. She is a licensed attorney and has served in multiple senior executive roles overseeing complex regulatory and compliance frameworks.



Most recently, from 2023 to 2026, Kelley served as Executive Director for the Boards of Barbers & Cosmetology and Hearing Aid Specialists & Opticians at the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR). In that role, she directed board operations, advanced regulatory policy, and ensured compliance with state law. Her leadership included Virginia's adoption of the Cosmetology Compact, and she was elected Treasurer of the Interstate Cosmetology Compact Commission. In fall 2025, she also participated in Virginia's Commonwealth Leadership Academy.

Prior to DPOR, Kelley served for more than a decade as Deputy Executive Director for multiple boards at the Virginia Department of Health Professions, where she managed credentialing, disciplinary, inspection, and audit programs. Earlier in her career, she practiced law at a mid-sized Richmond firm, representing clients in both state and federal courts. She holds a B.S. in Criminal Justice from Virginia Commonwealth University and a J.D. from the University of Richmond.

The Board has indicated that Kelley's leadership will emphasize innovative digital transformation initiatives and continued strong regulatory stewardship.

Additionally, MVDB has new communication procedures dealers should be aware of. To improve response times and ensure inquiries are routed to the correct staff immediately, the MVDB has implemented a new, streamlined email system. Dealers should use the appropriate email address below based on the nature of their inquiry:

Licensing & Dealer Plates

For all dealership and salesperson license applications and dealer plate requests:

dboardlicensing@mvdv.virginia.gov

Use for: All license applications (initial, renewals, salesperson) and all dealer plate applications

Complaints & Advertising Regulation

For consumer or dealer complaints and advertising compliance matters:

dboardcomplaints@mvdb.virginia.gov

Use for: Consumer complaints, responses to complaint notices, and advertising regulation inquiries

Civil Penalties & Transaction Recovery Fund

dboard@mvdb.virginia.gov

Use for: civil penalty payments, Board action compliance, temporary closures, surety bonds, and Transaction Recovery Fund questions

Dealer Reminders

- Using the correct email address will help prevent processing delays caused by internal forwarding
- All attachments should be submitted in PDF format
- Include your dealer certificate number in the subject line to expedite handling
- These contact emails are also listed on the MVDB website under the “Contact Us” section

WANADA will continue to monitor developments at the MVDB and keep members informed of regulatory updates that affect dealership operations.

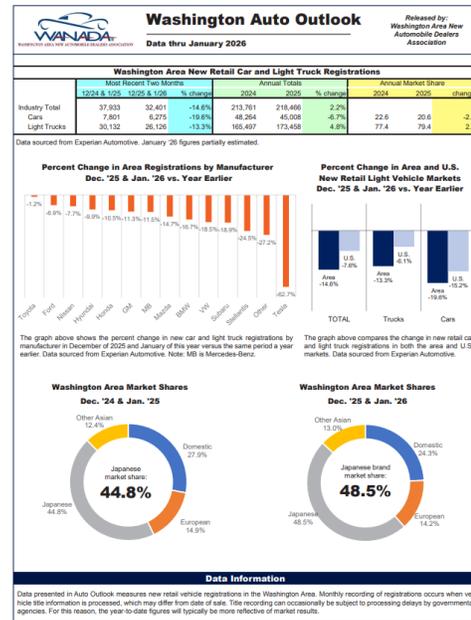
WANADA in Annapolis



WANADA CEO John O'Donnell, with Rob Smith, President of Fitzgerald Auto Malls, delivers testimony in support of the “Jack Fitzgerald Transparency” bill in Annapolis, which has garnered support from MADA as well as WANADA.

DC Area Sales Report for January Now Available

New retail car and light truck registrations in December 2025 and January 2026 declined 14.6% compared with the same period a year earlier, driven primarily by a nearly 20% drop in passenger car registrations, while light trucks fell 13.3%. Despite the recent slowdown, total registrations for calendar year 2025 increased 2.2% over 2024, with light trucks continuing to gain share and now accounting for nearly 80% of the market. Japanese brands expanded their regional market share to 48.5%, while domestic brands ceded ground, falling to 24.3%. Several brands posted notable gains in the latest period—including Toyota, Hyundai, Acura, and Genesis—while others experienced sharper pullbacks, underscoring continued volatility as dealers navigate affordability constraints, inventory normalization, and shifting consumer demand entering 2026.



Download and view the full report [here](#).

Maryland MVA Updates

The following bullets are excerpted from Maryland MVA’s February 2026 “Talking Points” newsletter. We hope you find this information useful, and if you have a topic, you’d like us to cover in a future newsletter, please send it to Kristin Orlando-Dillahunt at korlando@mdot.maryland.gov.

Vehicle Services - Tips & Reminders

- When a vehicle is traded in, the trade-in date should never be after the delivery date. If a trade-in date is entered after the delivery date, you will now receive an error message preventing the transaction from going through. This functionality was recently added.
- All questions or concerns about transactions submitted through the business portal for the Glen Burnie office only should be sent via email to MDDTTS@mdot.maryland.gov. In the subject line of the email, please enter the confirmation number and the last name of the customer or business name.
- If you receive a “Pending Rejection” notification for a portal transaction, you must respond within 24 hours. After 24 hours, the transaction will be rejected and must be resubmitted. · It is necessary to complete a transmittal sheet (VR-205 dated 8/22) when uploading portal transactions. The MVA is looking to make an enhancement to the portal to create an electronic transmittal sheet when transactions are uploaded to the portal. · Print on Demand – The bulletin distributed on 2/5/2026 notifies businesses that the

VR-005 has been added to the list of forms that have become “print on demand” and will no longer be available to order from the MVA warehouse.

Business Licensing & Compliance Updates

Our new office point of contact location will be located within the Glen Burnie Branch Office. Please enter the front of Building A. We will be located in the first station on your left as you enter the main building after the kiosk area.

- Please utilize [this link](#) to assist in your scheduling. Please select the option below when scheduling an appointment in our office.
- When you arrive, please check into your appointment from your phone or at the Information Counter.
- Appointment times will be Monday through Friday from 8:30am-12pm, but we can also help you until 4:30pm. If you need in-person assistance between 12pm and 4:30pm, please go to the Information Center and ask to speak with someone from the Business Licensing & Compliance Division. Someone from the Division will meet with you at the station.

If you have a topic, you’d like us to cover in a future newsletter, please send it to Kristin Orlando-Dillahunt at korlando@mdot.maryland.gov.

WRAP’s Super Bowl SoberRide® Campaign Delivers Record Impact

WANADA partner Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) reported a highly successful Super Bowl weekend for its SoberRide® program, providing 1,228 free safe rides across the Washington metropolitan area and potentially preventing more than a thousand impaired driving incidents. During its eight-hour operating window—from 8:00 p.m. Sunday, February 8 through 4:00 a.m. Monday, February 9—the program effectively removed a would-be drunk driver from local roadways every 23 seconds. The results represent a dramatic increase over last year’s inaugural Super Bowl offering, which served 230 riders. Since its launch in 1991, WRAP’s SoberRide® program has now delivered more than 102,500 free safe rides, underscoring its long-standing role in promoting roadway safety and responsible decision-making throughout Greater Washington.

This Super Bowl LX, Don't Drink and Drive!
Designate a sober driver or use WRAP's SoberRide® powered by Lyft!

SoberRide®
Get a FREE Lyft ride home (up to \$15) this Super Bowl
Visit www.SoberRide.com for code
Limited quantities available

Enter the code in the app's Payment Tab under the "Add Lyft Pass" option. Valid for up to \$15 off one ride taken home in Lyft's Washington D.C. coverage area from 8:00 p.m. Sunday, February 8, 2026 until 4:00 a.m. on Monday, February 9, 2026. You must be 21 years or older to use this service. Subject to Lyft's Terms of Service. Valid for new and existing Lyft users while supplies last. The SoberRide code will be released to the public at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 8th and can be used only during the aforementioned period.

| | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| 2026 EXECUTIVE SOBERRIDE® SPONSORS: Anheuser-Busch DIAGEO Lyft | 2026 GOLD SOBERRIDE® SPONSORS: Comcast Enterprise RESPONSIBILITY.ORG MOLSON COORS | 2026 SILVER SOBERRIDE® SPONSORS: EXPRESS BETHUN-FORMAN RAMW | 2026 PUBLIC PARTNER SOBERRIDE® SPONSORS: United We Go! MOT VADDMV |
|--|--|---|---|

Some restrictions apply. See www.SoberRide.com for further details or call WRAP at 703.893.0461.
Limited quantities available. Valid for new and existing Lyft users only. 21 years of age or older. One offer per user. Available up to 10:00 p.m. ride taken home in Lyft's Washington, D.C. coverage area from 8:00 p.m. Sunday, February 8, 2026 until 4:00 a.m. on Monday, February 9, 2026. Discount does not apply to cancellative fees, change charges or fees. No cash value. May not be sold, transferred or combined with other offers. Subject to Lyft's Terms of Service. SoberRide® is a registered trademark of the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP).

The WANADA Bulletin is Sponsored by:

