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Sent: Sunday, July 20, 2008 8:00 AM
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Subject: Motor Trend/Edmunds/various blog articles on LaFontaine grand opening

There are several photos within these articles, which I realize won't show on BB, but the text will. Good stuff. The Ad Age piece is being picked up in a lot of different places.

Deb

Green cars not enough? Green GM dealership reopens in Detroit

Posted July 18 2008 10:53 AM by [Zach Gale](#)

Category: [Dealers](#), [General Motors](#)



U.S. automotive consumers are scrambling to get into more fuel efficient vehicles, but will they care if the dealership from which they buy is environmentally friendly as well? The LaFontaine Automotive Group, with its \$15 million Buick-Pontiac-GMC and Cadillac dealership in Detroit, is betting the facility's green credentials will have an impact on sales.

The voluntary \$2 million green upgrades earned the dealership Gold Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) from the U.S. Green Building Council. Besides attracting environmentally conscious buyers, the dealership's custom features may pay for themselves in as little as five or six years, says owner Mike LaFontaine.



Those features include 85 skylights and solid doors made of corncobs and wheat. A \$600,000 geothermal heating and cooling system save energy, as does the fact that 85 percent of the car wash water is recycled. Like Pat Lobb Toyota, a Texas-based dealership that became the first in the U.S. to get green certification, the 63,000-square-foot LaFontaine dealership uses rainwater to water the indigenous plants which supposedly require less water.

Employees are encouraged to keep up the green spirit. Employees who carpool to work or drive low-emissions or alternative fuel vehicles get special parking spots, and those employees who bike to work get their own storage areas and changing rooms. On Saturdays, employees wear "polo-type shirts" made of organic cotton.

So now we turn the floor to you. If an environmentally friendly dealership was located in your area, would you be more inclined to do business there than at a non-certified dealership?

EDMUNDS INSIDE LINE

News

Southeast Michigan General Motors Dealer Opens Huge - and Green - New Dealership

Date posted: 07-17-2008

HIGHLAND, Michigan — This town on the far outskirts of the Detroit suburbs was the scene for the grand opening of an ambitious new General Motors dealership today. Seemingly unconcerned by bad financial news about Detroit in general and GM in particular, the LaFontaine family ceremonially opened a 63,000-square-foot Buick-Pontiac-GMC-Cadillac dealership on Wednesday.

The \$15 million facility has been entered for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification with the U.S. Green Building Council. It would be the first Michigan auto dealership to get the rating. GM says the dealership "incorporates key principles of sustainable design and construction." Among those are multiple skylights, a white-painted roof, and geothermal heating and cooling run in part by energy from solar panels.

At the grand opening for media today, the LaFontaine Automotive Group also presented the [Buick Invicta](#) showcar, which made its world debut at the 2008 Beijing Auto Show in April. This was the Invicta's first North American appearance.

What this means to you: The LaFontaine Automotive Group is busy making lemonade. — *Laura Sky Brown, Correspondent*



Recommend this:

Green GM Dealership In Detroit Cuts Energy More Than 50%



General Motors

unveiled a \$15 million green dealership outside of Detroit today, [AdAge reports](#).

The 64,000-square-foot dealership, owned by LaFontaine Automotive Group, taps into natural resources for its new building.

The Buick-Pontiac-GMC and Cadillac facility has installed 85 skylights along with doors made of corncobs and wheat made. The dealership uses rainwater for landscape irrigation and 85 percent of its car-wash water is recycled. The building has a geothermal heating and cooling system, with 64 in-ground wells that capture energy stored in the earth.

Two years ago because the dealership was outgrowing its old location it decided to “go green” with its new building, and spent an extra \$2 million for that and for the LEED Gold certification.

The dealership expects to recoup the costs in five or six years, instead of the original 11 years, thanks to over 50 percent energy savings.

The first dealership [awarded LEED Gold certification](#) was a Toyota's dealership in Rockwall, Texas in May. Toyota also plans to make 10 percent of its dealerships green by 2011.

General Motors [is adding](#) what it claims is the world's largest rooftop solar power installation to its car assembly plant in Figueruelas, Zaragoza, Spain. When the project is completed in the fall of 2008, 85,000 solar panels will cover about 2,000,000 sq. ft. of roof at the plant.