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5K Walk to Join Dream Cruise

ROYAL OAK – Fifth Third Bank will sponsor the inaugural Cruise In Shoes / 5K Fun Run / Walk.

The run/walk will take place the morning of Aug. 18 – the same date as the 18th annual Woodward Dream Cruise.

The Run / Walk will begin at 7:30 a.m. on Yorba Linda Blvd.

and then continues on to offer participants the rare opportunity to run on historic Woodward Ave.

Then it winds through several Royal Oak neighborhood streets to finally finish at Shrine High School.

To pre-register or for more information, visit www.CruiseInShoes.com until Aug. 16.

Michigan Team 2nd in Ford / AAA Skills Competition

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

for Ford Motor Co., was a key guest speaker at the awards ceremony.

"This is a program that is near and dear to our hearts here at Ford Motor Company," he said, "and we couldn't be happier to host this along with AAA for a number of years now."

"I have to tell you, this is one of my favorite events . . . It inspires us in terms of the dedication and enthusiasm that you (show) in endeavoring to win one of these awards . . . It's really great to see how you put your education, your skills, your training and your passion to work and, also for us, to see the passion you have toward the automotive business . . . to me, this event is a great reminder that we work in a truly special business and it helps inspire us again to continue to make great products for our customers."

Fields congratulated all the

student contestants, stating that Ford is "very proud" to celebrate 18 years of partnership with AAA on the Auto Skills events.

"Literally thousands of young men and women who have come before you have made great careers in the automotive business, and of course, we remain very committed here at Ford to training the best technicians to basically go out and create the future of the automobile industry, both at the dealership level but also the OEM level, the manufacturing level."

"And currently, if you look at our network across the country we have more than 33,000 technicians, and these are great careers."

"Every time I go visit a dealer, I make sure I visit what's known as the back end of the business, but in actuality it's the front end of the business in terms of the customer satisfaction that drives our business, but also profitability for our dealerships."

The complexity of modern vehicles is also helping to create demand for a new generation of technicians and repair staff. Long gone are the references to "grease monkeys" and "shop rats" to do all of this sophisticated work.

Fields said despite the "volatile" economy over the last couple of years, the automotive industry is still growing, because people still need and want cars.

"And it's going to be that way for a long time to come," he said.

"And the other piece of good news is, there's a lot of pent-up demand out there, because over the last couple of years folks have held on to their vehicle a lot longer . . . So we at Ford see a very large and growing demand for qualified technicians, both now and in the future."



Ford NASCAR driver Trevor Bayne, winner of the 2011 Daytona 500, signed autographs for visitors at the Ford / AAA Skills event.



The Saline High School team, representing Michigan, finished in 2nd place in the Ford / AAA Skills national competition for car repair in Dearborn recently.

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SCAN ME

Chrysler Partners with 'Gotham' Flick

BURBANK, Calif. – Warner Bros. Pictures and the Chrysler brand have teamed up to bring fans the opportunity of a lifetime surrounding the July 20th release of "The Dark Knight Rises," the much-anticipated conclusion to the Dark Knight movie trilogy.

June 15 marked the launch of the "Imported from Gotham City" Contest, allowing fans to create an original co-branded TV spot featuring these two iconic brands.

Director/writer/producer Christopher Nolan will select the winning spot, which will debut on television around the release of the film.

Contestants will have used

two weeks to create their "Imported from Gotham City" original commercial utilizing a suite of assets, including: Chrysler 300 car footage, film footage, and music stems from the trailer that contestants can remix for their spot.

At the conclusion of the contest, a gallery of submissions will go live on Saturday, June 30, kicking off a four-day public voting period when fans can weigh in on their favorite Gotham City collaboration.

The top three finalists will be announced online and Christopher Nolan will personally choose the winner.

"We're excited for the op-

portunity to tap into the creative community online and allow those who participate to showcase their talent and passion. We look forward to seeing what unique spots people produce," said Nolan.

The winning spot will be determined by a number of judging criteria, including public vote, originality, memorability and brand effectiveness.

Warner Bros. and Chrysler will debut the winning commercial on national TV the week of the film's release – watch for specific date and airing details to be announced shortly. The winner will receive a trip to Hollywood later in July.

New Center Park Hosts Movie Nights

by Gerald Scott

The days of the summertime "Tastefest" food and music festival along West Grand Boulevard in New Center are long gone.

Economics forced the end of Tastefest back around 2009, but that doesn't mean that the New Center Area is short of public entertainment these days.

Rather, New Center Park, a pocket park at the corner of West Grand Boulevard and 2nd Ave. in Detroit, offers an interesting mix of free movies and free jazz evenings during the summer.

And the offerings draw pretty good crowds, too, according to Julie Kouloumberis, who is the Park's manager of Marketing, Community Relations and Operations.

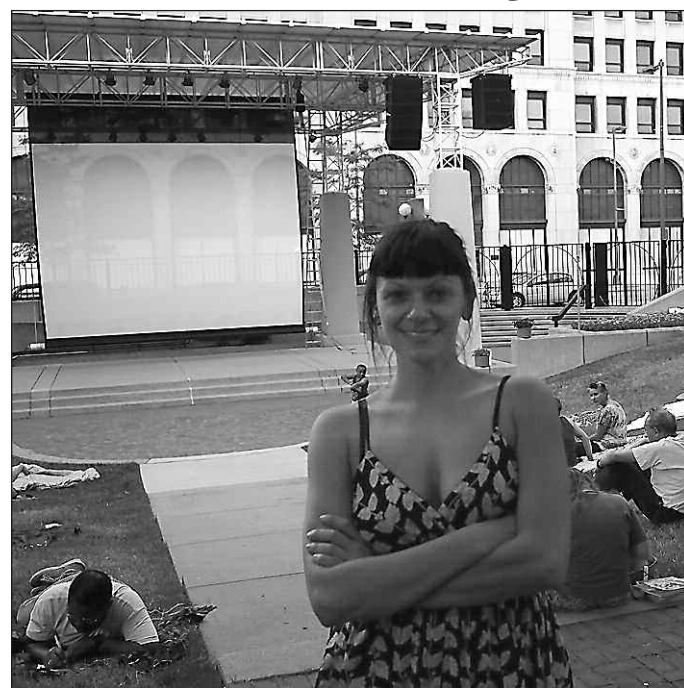
Kouloumberis discussed the park's operations recently during an interview just prior to last Wednesday evening's showing of "The Goonies."

Asked which movie drew the biggest crowd recently, Kouloumberis said, "We showed 'The Big Lebowski' last year and that was a good turnout."

"The park can hold 1,246 people – that's what the fire marshal tells us."

"But besides the movies and jazz, we also hold separate events here like rock shows, techno, fashion shows."

Indeed the stage is in a rather spectacular setting, with Cadillac Place (the former GM Building) across the street to the east and the massive Fisher Building to the north.



Julie Kouloumberis, manager of New Center Park, hosts jazz concerts and movie nights during the summer months.

"Our events are popular," Kouloumberis noted. "They wait for the gates to open to get the best 'seats' on the lawn prior to the movie."

When New Center Park hosts a jazz or movie night, the gates typically open around 8 p.m. and the movie shows at dusk, which is about 9:30 p.m. in the summer.

Visitors typically throw blankets on the lawn to watch the movie, but they do have chairs with garden tables, concessions and even an outdoor smoker's area adjacent to the popular corner of New Center.

One visitor to the Park checking out the movie action for the first time was Henry Ford Hospital research assis-

tant Tiffany Drane, who heard about New Center Park's movie night by word-of-mouth.

"It's a beautiful night to be in the park," she observed prior to the showing of "The Goonies."

Remaining movies on the summer schedule include "Uptown Saturday Night" (June 27); "Ghostbusters" (July 4); "Coming to America" (July 11); "Raiders of the Lost Ark" (July 18); "To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar" (July 25); "Caddyshack" (Aug. 1); "Do the Right Thing" (Aug. 8); "The Legend of Drunken Master" (Aug. 15); "E.T. – the Extraterrestrial" (Aug. 22); and "The Princess Bride" (Aug. 29).