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GM says worldwide sales up

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DETROIT — Despite General Motors Corp.'s problems in its home market, the automaker's worldwide sales were at their highest level in 27 years in 2005, thanks to growth in Asia and Latin America, GM Chairman and CEO Rick Wagoner said.

"Getting outside of the U.S. market, we had a good year, on balance, around the world," Wagoner said in a transcript of remarks released Saturday by GM.

Wagoner said preliminary sales figures show GM sold 9.2 million vehicles worldwide. The only other year GM sold more than 9 million vehicles was 1978, he said.

The figure raises the bar for Toyota Motor Corp., which is close to surpassing GM in worldwide sales to become the world's largest automaker. Toyota produced about 8.1 million vehicles in 2005 and has announced plans to build 9.06 million vehicles in 2006.

Wagoner said more than half of GM's sales are now outside the United States, and China is the automaker's second biggest market.

GM was particularly strong in Asia, selling more than 1 million vehicles for the first time ever, Wagoner said. GM's market share in the Asia-Pacific region was 5.8 percent. In 2004, GM sold 887,000 vehicles in the region and had a 5.2 percent market share.

CEASEFIRE

From page A1

Police Commander Gregory Anderson, who has been on CeaseFire Aurora's board since its inception.

"It's hard to maintain staff when ... they don't know where their next paycheck essentially would be coming from."

Indeed, within two years the program saw three changes in leadership and slowly lost its four-person staff.

Last week, CeaseFire's only remaining paid employee, interim director Servando Ramos, quit to work at Breaking Free, a social-service agency for Aurora families.

But Ramos' departure, which further enfeebls Ceasefire, coincides with plans by Chapa LaVia and AU staff to add muscle and manpower to the program by bringing it under the aegis of the Aurora University School of Social Work.

Aurora University's leadership and fiscal management would enable CeaseFire to hire and retain staff and bring the program more into line with its Chicago model, said School of Social Work Director Ken Millar, who would supervise CeaseFire after the move.

The program would be able to hire at least four paid employees, including two of the kind of outreach workers CeaseFire founder Gary Slutkin calls fundamental — young people from targeted neighborhoods who in the past have experienced or used violence themselves. In parts of Chicago, those staffers fan out onto the streets at night to try to resolve conflicts and

convince youth to entertain alternatives to violence.

"It's one thing for a parent or a cop ... to say 'don't do this, don't do that,'" explains Slutkin, a public health professor at the University of Illinois in Chicago. "But it's another thing (for) people from your own age group to say (violence) 'is going to make things worse. It's going to make things worse for your mom.'"

While CeaseFire Aurora has sent staff into the community in the past, said Anderson and CeaseFire board member Clayton Muhammad, the workers were charged mostly with tasks like helping residents affected by violence form watch groups or access social services, not confronting gang-affiliated youth to avert a shooting.

Employing outreach workers who will take on that task has proved to be one major roadblock in transferring CeaseFire to Aurora University. The school must determine how to insure staff-members who interact with potentially armed gang members on a regular basis.

Millar believes AU will surmount that issue and hire permanent staff sometime this year. He was unable to predict when in 2006 that will happen, but when it does, he said, "we'll finally, I think, get out on the streets and start doing what this program is meant to do."

Anderson, the police commander, is also sanguine about the future of CeaseFire Aurora. In Chicago, five years of research preceded the program's unveiling.

"Nothing is as valuable as experience," Anderson said. "You have to start out with baby steps and let it grow up from there."

LETTER

From page A1

some of the improvements you'll see, not only on the opinion pages, but throughout The Beacon:

■ Leadership — reporting and commentary that not only targets problems but suggests solutions.

■ Readership interaction — We'll poll your opinions on the stories we publish and print your responses.

■ "Janes and Joes" — That's the shorthand for real, honest-to-goodness human beings, folks who can give a grassroots perspective of the events and issues affecting the communities we serve.

■ Pro and con stories — brief, easy-to-read stories that provide countering viewpoints of the same issue, as well as the chance for you to weigh in.

■ Commentary — more local columnists and the perspectives of people from your hometown, whether that's Aurora, Geneva, Plano, Oswego, Montgomery or any of our 15 Fox Valley communities. (We will be naming those local writers in the next few weeks.)

■ Web site interaction — We'll use the Internet more effectively to solicit your ideas and to supplement the news we print in hard copy. We'll also use it to give you more up-to-the-minute access to local news.

Mike will be in charge of special sections, an area where we will improve the quality and quantity of our local content. You can reach Mike at (630) 844-5853 or mcetera@scn1.com.

Associate Editor John Russell will be the day-to-day contact for A Section

content. He's the editor who will assign and edit the daily news stories, choose which national stories to localize and coordinate coverage with other editors in the Sun-Times News Group. You can reach John at (630) 844-5902 or at jrussell@scn1.com.

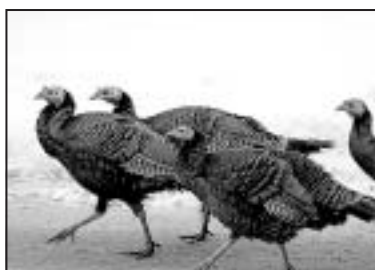
In the coming months, John and Associate Editor Denise Crosby will lead an intense effort to provide readers with stories that hit close to home in each of three zones. But more about that later.

Today, I invite you to take a look at The Beacon News. Renew your subscriptions and tell your friends to subscribe. Watch us as we evolve into one of the top newspapers of our circulation size in the country.

In my opinion, it's going to be a wild ride.



Mike Cetera



Coming Monday Flock of fowl

Naperville subdivision's newest neighbors cause flap. **Then Is Now**

Chicago man shot dead on Aurora street

BEACON NEWS STAFF

AURORA — Police have one man in custody after the shooting death of another on the city's near East Side Friday night.

Antoine T. Bell, whose age and exact address in Chicago are unknown, suffered multiple gunshot wounds.

He was discovered in the driver's seat of a silver SUV parked in the 1100 block of Grand Boulevard, Aurora police said.

He was transported to Rush-Copley Medical Center by Aurora paramedics but was pronounced dead shortly after arrival.

Police said they originally encountered the vehicle while on routine patrol in the area of Grand Boulevard and Hopkins Street.

Officers witnessed two subjects fleeing the vehicle at 8:10 p.m. and pursued one of them for two blocks to a home in the 0-99 block of North Loucks Street.

Backup officers discovered Bell's body in the vehicle after an 8:13 p.m. call alerted them to the shooting.

When officers arrived at the Loucks Street home, a large pit bull dog charged them, and po-

lice were forced to shoot.

The dog survived the shooting and was taken by Aurora Animal Control.

The other occupants of the house were evacuated, but police had a long wait to apprehend the suspect, who refused to come out until 9:30 p.m., when he surrendered without incident.

Police are still investigating the subject's connection to the homicide and would not release his name.

As of Saturday night, he still was being questioned by detectives.

According to Aurora police spokesman Dan Ferrelli, the home was searched Saturday after a warrant was secured.

Police said that the preliminary investigation has not ruled out gang or drug motivations.

The Kane County Sheriff's Department assisted Aurora police in responding to the incidents Friday night.

Anyone with information regarding this investigation is asked to call Aurora police detectives at (630) 801-6663, or Aurora Area Crime Stoppers at (630) 892-1000.

Crime Stoppers offers a cash reward of up to \$1,000 for information that leads to the arrest of suspects.

For the Record

The Beacon News tries to be accurate and fair in every story it publishes. When a mistake occurs, we want to fix it. To report errors, call Associate Editor John Russell at 844-5902.

Recent Deaths

Obituaries / Page C12

- Barrows, Ryan A.**, 21, Montgomery
- Diasio Sr., Leonard A.**, 88, Montgomery
- Feinen, Samantha Josephine**, 9, Oswego
- Hamilton, William H.**, 43, Aurora
- Henning, Herman Ervan**, 87, Aurora
- Lamz, Esther Dorothy Schuring**, 84, Elburn
- Mack, Robert A.**, 43, formerly Aurora
- May, Leora Bernice**, 86, Oswego
- Ross, Gage William**, infant
- Simmons, April M.**, 27, Yorkville
- Stadel, Florence**, 89, Aurora
- Ward, Vanessa M.**, 27, Ottawa

Photo reprints

■ Reprints are available of photos shot by our by staff that have been published in The Beacon News. To order a photo reprint, stop at the front counter or request a form by calling (630) 844-5834. Reprints are \$25 for an 8-by-10 color photo. For details on extra charges and payment, call (630) 844-5834.

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or Evenings and weekends (630) 327-2462
Please RSVP by Thursday, Jan. 12, 2006.

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