VW Americanization owes much to local talent

Volkswagen's plunge into automobile production in the U.S. received much of its early impetus from a team of peo-ple with western Wayne and Oakland

pie with western Wayne and Oakland county connections.

Ten of the West German giant's initial 22-member American launch team were formerly employed at General Motors Corp. Livonia Spring and Bumper Plant.

That the team knew its business when the American substidiary was formed is evidenced by the fact that VW's domestic operation is already eclipsing production and safes marks of American Motors Corp, and has moved into fourth place behind GM, Ford and Chrysler.

That's fast company to be keeping in just a little more than two years of existence.

existence.
It's especially fast, bearing in mind that the staff nucleus started out with only a shell of an assembly plant in Pennsylvania and a dream of becoming the first new manufacturer of American cars since Studebaker folded its operation in 1964.

eration in 1964.

Tapped to head that dream was Richard E. Dauch, who was appointed vice president of manufacturing for the fledgling firm late in October, 1976.

Dauch, a former plant manager at Spring and Bumper, whose GM career was considered meteoric, began immediately to build a staff.

Not surprisingly, many of his key aides were chosen from the Spring and

Dauch, a former football player at Purdue University, surrounded himself with others who had athletic back-

grounds.
One of the first people he selected was Marvin G. McFadden, a former Michigan State and Pittsburgh Steelers lineman.

lineman.

McFadden was personnel director at the Spring and Bumper Plant and was

appointed general director of personnel for Volkswagen, (McFadden has since lett Volkswagen and accepted a position with SCANS, Inc., a Livonia-based firm with plants in several, foreign countries.)

Dauch and McFadden sat in Dauch's office in the company's Warren head-quarters recently and discussed the early, turbulent days and what it was like to start a corporation.

They spoke of madcap flights to and from Volkswagen's West German head-quarters, of writing policies and regulations which would have to govern a soon-to-be-sprawling corporate complex, of interviewing prospective employees under the most bizarre derich composible — and do it in a high burry. At one point, they were using Dauch's Bloomfield Hills home for interviewing potential employees. "In many cases, we didn't want one person to know we were interviewing another one, and we were shuttling

"In many cases, we didn't want one person to know we were interviewing another one, and we were shuttling them in and out of front and back doors," laughed Dauch. "They were utilizing the kitchen, dining room, family room—even the bedrooms.
"Dick's wife tried to go to bed on night and when she walked into her room, I was interviewing some gus when the word was the word was a single with the word was a single word with the word was a single with the word was a single was a single word was a single was a single word was a single w

officials, fly home for two weeks of implementing plans; fly back for two weeks, fly home for two weeks, etc. McFadden's job, in addition to steadily building up the staff, was to handle the globe-traveling Dauch's administrative duties in the company, a gruesome pace to maintain.

Other people were maintaining the same kind of pressure-packed schedule as they "came on board," the men said. One person was hired on a Friday and was aboard a plane bound for West

There was transportation which had

There was transportance.

There was transportance.

What had to be done in order to make the corporation a reality was mind-boggling.

The West German hierarchy predicted it couldn't be accomplished in anything less than 38 months. The American Mark the pround and procans got it off the ground and pro-ducing automobiles in 18 months.

To accomplish that goal, Dauch re-cruited the kind of people he was used to working with — youthful, experi-enced, aggressive and loyal.

"That's why we looked for people with sports backgrounds, where possible," he said. "People who are used to working as a team were essential if we were going to be successful."

"If we had had the production capacity, we could have outsold Chrysler in January," said Dauch in summing up the company's progress.

Late last month, the firm's mam-moth Pennsylvania plant cranked out its 60,000th vehicle since it went into production last April. There was machinery to be designed and ordered.

By next month, the Pennsylvania plant will be operating on two full shifts a day and producing a total of 400,000 cars per year, according to production schedules.

There are other Spring and Bumper Plant people who are playing a major role in the new corporation's develop-ment, according to Dauch.

They are, along with their titles at Volkswagen:

Robert Pickering, general superin-endent, South Charleston.
 George Dellas, superintendent of

manufacturing planning, Warren.

Richard Donaldson, general superintendend of production, Pennsylvania.

Paul Hegwood, department head, maintenance, Pennsylvania.

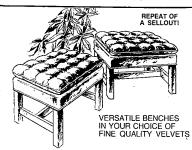
Charles (Chub) Krug, maintenance supervisor, Pennsylvania.

Richard Zella, shift superintendent, maintenance, Pennsylvania.

Bruce D. Berger, acting director of corporate labor relations, Warren.

George Knapp, administrator of labor relations, Pennsylvania.

Reeder Singler, director of personnel, South Charleston.



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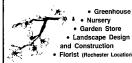
There was temporary housing to be acquired for incoming corporate offi-

Another plant was purchased in South Charleston, W.Va., and it had to be staffed, renovated and put into operation for stamping body panels.

There were thousands of people to be hired in the future to staff the plants, a process which was to take months of

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