

Economy is calmer — Whitman

The world economy has moved into a calmer and more nearly predictable era, said Marina v.N. Whitman, General Motors vice president and group executive.

Marina v.N. Whitman said today, in remarks entitled "Scorecard on the Global Economy: Past, Present, and Future."

Speaking to the Women's Economic Club of Detroit on "Scorecard on the Global Economy," economist Whitman said today's problems and their solutions are clearer than those of the tempestuous 1970s, when the world economy reeled from the oil, inflation and interest rate shocks — but no less difficult.

Whitman noted that in the U.S., oil prices, inflation, interest rates and the value of the dollar are all down.

SHE WAS optimistic about tax reform, which she said may well improve the quality of investments and thus contribute to America's international competitiveness.

She also noted signs that the regulatory climate has improved and that productivity may be picking up. And on the international scene, while "economic policy coordination continues to prove difficult, at least a start has been made."

Adding up her "scorecard," the GM executive said that the "future of the world economy depends to a great extent on how well we deal with the remaining problems."

- Budget and trade deficits.
- Hangover effects of the higher dollar.
- Slow productivity growth.
- The threat of overcapacity in many industries.
- Debt problems of the less-developed countries.
- Protectionism — "a major threat to global growth."

Whitman hoped that nations, recognizing their interdependence, would demonstrate the "courage and foresight to set aside their parochial, short-term interests in favor of the long-term strategies to raise the level of human wealth and welfare throughout the world."

Ford exec says truck sales are up

Designating 1987 as "the year of the truck," a Ford Motor Co. executive predicts that growth in the compact segment will "continue to be phenomenal."

"Just five years ago, there was no such thing as a mini van or a compact truck," said Robert L. Rewey, a Ford vice president and general manager of Ford Division, in previewing the 1987 model product line-up.

"The truck market is big — and getting bigger every day — with compact models accounting for more than 55 percent of all truck sales."

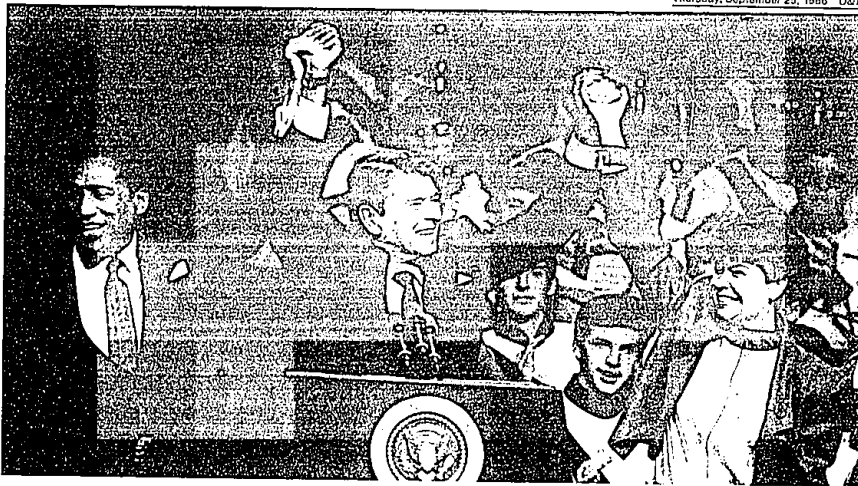
As evidence of this growth, Rewey cited Ford's compact Ranger model. Introduced in 1982, it already has passed the 1 million mark in sales.

"THIS 'EXPLOSION' in truck popularity is taking place because buyers now are substituting trucks for cars in their new-vehicle purchases. More than half of the compact trucks sold today are bought for 'fun' reasons.

"For example, it now is fashionable for women to be seen in dressed-up trucks . . .

"In June, July and August, Aerostar achieved combined bus and van sales leadership over Chevrolet, Dodge, Plymouth and Toyota.

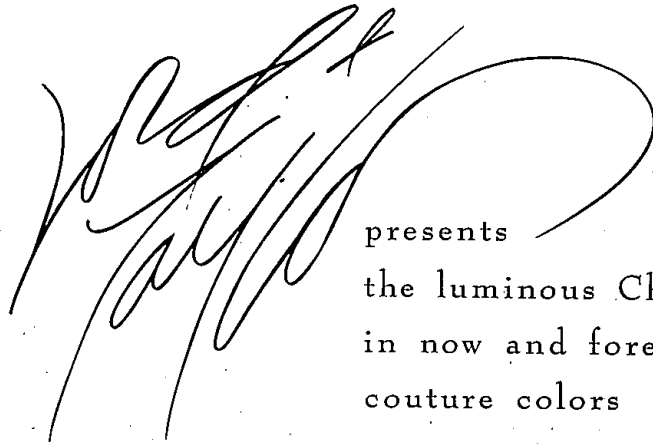
"Our new Ranger SuperCab has become the fastest-selling extended-cab version in the industry, while our F-Series is retaining its familiar title as world's best-selling vehicle, car or truck, import or domestic."



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Reagan stumps for GOP

President Ronald Reagan joins hands with Republican gubernatorial nominee William Lucas and Colton Engler, the GOP lieutenant governor nominee, at a rally Wednesday in Detroit's Cobo Arena. Some 10,000 Republican supporters and three high school bands were on hand. Reagan later attended a fund-raiser luncheon and reception as part of a three-hour campaign stop in Detroit.



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