



Show expects a record turnout

Detroit Auto Show officials are looking for a bonanza turnout at the 1985 show, Jan. 12-20 at Cobo Hall. The 1984 auto show drew more than 467,000 people.

New car sales are up more than 20 percent above last year, according to Dan Hayes, executive vice president of the Detroit Auto Dealers Association and general manager of the show.

"If that's any indication of the public's mood," said Hayes, "the upcoming show could top the half million mark."

That would be the first time that has happened since the first auto show was held in 1907.

The Detroit Auto Show has traditionally been recognized as the country's most elegant auto show. Manufacturers know, of course, that they are exhibiting on their doorstep and the best examples of their products are displayed.

Planning for the show is a year round activity of the 234 person dealer group. By the time the show opens, the 1985 Auto Show chairman, Bill Cook, a Buick/Porsche/Audi dealer in Farmington Hills, will have spent hundreds of hours away from his business in scores of auto show meetings. Others involved in the planning are Dick Harris, a Detroit Cadillac dealer; Rick Thomas, a Chrysler-Plymouth dealer from Southgate; Jack Demmer, a Wayne Ford dealer; Bob Page, a Southfield Toyota dealer; and Joe Ricci, a Detroit AMC dealer. Also attending every auto show committee meeting is Lou LaRiche, a Chevy dealer who is the current president of the dealer group.

FROM SUMMER on these men meet regularly to deal with the thousands of items, large and small, that go into putting on the show.

"It's awfully hard work," said Cook, "but the very size of this show demands constant attention during the planning stages. Besides, every auto show committee tries to out do the previous year's committee."

The 1985 show will see more than 500 cars and trucks on display, the most ever, including such exotics as Jaguar, Ferrari, Alfa-Romeo and Avanti.

A new twist to the show is a greatly expanded van conversion exhibit. Last year's show featured a couple of dozen vans displayed in Cobo Hall's River Room. The '85 show has expanded to more than 70 vans and takes over all of Hall D, the lower hall in the Cobo facility. The food concession has been moved to Hall D and country radio station WCXI will be broadcasting from the van exhibit.

While WCXI broadcasts from the lower hall, at least nine other stations will be broadcasting from Halls A, B and C. In a feature unique to the Detroit Auto Show, local radio stations are invited to display their talent in front of the hundreds of thousands of people who attend. The 1984 show had nine stations broadcasting from the show. By early December auto show officials had 12 stations line up for '85 and expect more to come in.

Bill Cook characterizes station participation as a great cooperative effort, almost the perfect example of an industry

coming together to promote the state's number one product."

He also admits that the stations generate a tremendous amount of publicity for the show and says that the show's theme — "The Talk of the Town" — will be particularly appropriate with so many stations participating.

Visitors to the show will once again have the opportunity to win one of 13 automobiles. Show officials call it "The Most Incredible Contest." Thirteen new cars are stuffed with such items as basketballs and oil cans and those who enter the contest try to guess the cumulative total of all the items in all 13 cars.

THE 1985 show has also taken a literary and artistic bent. The auto dealers sponsored a short story writing contest which was promoted statewide. First place is worth \$1,000 with the winning entry published in the official auto show program. Second and third place winners received \$500 and \$250 respectively.

The art community gets its chance at the Charity Preview, the traditional black tie affair that is held 7-9 p.m. the Friday evening prior to the show. Forty Michigan artists have been invited by show officials to attend the Charity Preview and exhibit their work. The affair normally draws upwards of 3,500 people. Tickets are \$50 a couple and are available from the Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Metropolitan Detroit, the Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults, the Assistance League to the Northeast Guidance Center and the

Children's Center. Tickets are available at the door.

Tickets to the Auto Show are \$4. Children under 12 accompanied by their parents are admitted free. Senior citizens are also admitted free. The show runs noon to 10:30 p.m. on weekends and 2-10:30 p.m. weekdays.

At a glance

EVENT: 69th Detroit Auto Show
WHAT: Over 500 new 1985 domestic and imported cars and trucks, attractively showcased under one roof and a major van conversion show
EXOTIC CARS: Jaguar, Alfa Romeo, Ferrari, Maserati, Avanti, London Roadster
WHERE: Cobo Hall, Halls A, B, C and D. Total exhibit areas approximately 400,000 square feet
WHEN: Saturday, Jan. 12, to Sunday, Jan. 20. Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 10:30 p.m. and Mondays through Fridays, 2-10:30 p.m.
TICKETS: Adults, \$4; seniors, free and children \$1 (12 and under with parent are free)
PARKING: Cobo Hall garage, roof and arena, Joe Louis arena garage, Ford auditorium garage and ample nearby local facilities