



**UNION**  
LEASING

**MAY 2009**

## MANUFACTURER UPDATES

### NEWS AT A GLANCE

#### **Chrysler LLC**

**4/30/2009**

Chrysler LLC filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection and announced a partnership with Fiat SpA.

Attempts to rework debts with their lenders failed, pushing towards this outcome with the ultimate benefit of saving jobs both inside the organization as well as within their suppliers and dealers. As for Chrysler's US dealerships, it is expected that some of these will close.

Additionally, Chrysler Financial will stop providing loans, turning over the opportunity to GMAC.

During the legal proceeding, roughly over the next 60 days, Chrysler will idle its plants. Upon completion of the bankruptcy, Chief Executive, Robert Nardelli, will be leaving the company.

Further details regarding the joining with Fiat SpA is anticipated to be finalized for the emergence of a partnership immediately following the legal proceedings. This maneuver would allow Fiat to become the majority owner once the government loans are repaid.



#### **Ford Motor Co**

**4/1/2009**

On a positive note, Ford plans to reopen its Chicago based plant for the upcoming Ford Explorer production. This is estimated to refill 200 full-time and 600 part-time jobs.

**4/30/2009**

With the filing of bankruptcy by Chrysler LLC, shares of Ford Motor Co rose to a 9 month high as confidence in their ability to survive increases.

#### **General Motors**

**4/30/2009**

In a typical year, plant shutdowns cover a two week period to set up for the switch to the new model year, but as GM works to conserve money and reassess its business plan, that time frame may extend up to 9 weeks in some areas. For a full schedule of closures, please visit our website at

[www.unionleasing.com](http://www.unionleasing.com)

**4/27/2009**

GM formally announced that it will be cutting the Pontiac brand from its lineup. A staple of the GM family, the phase out could mirror that of the Oldsmobile nameplate and take up to two years. In addition to this portion of restructuring, GM plans to close up to 1200 underperforming dealerships across the US.





## USED VEHICLE LEASING

### Union Leasing Government Services

Many, if not all, of our clients in the Federal, State, and Municipal sector have been faced with budget cuts that always hit the Fleet Management Department. Many of you have been forced to continue to provide the same, if not additional, vehicle support on less money.

Union Leasing has been supplying many of our Government clients with current year or one year old vehicles at reduced lease rates. As the first year depreciation on a vehicle is the greatest, we are able to offer substantial savings on these low mileage off lease vehicles. This allows the agencies to continue the required support for their agencies missions at a reduced cost.

We offer off lease vehicles in sedans, vans, pickup trucks, sport utility vehicles, as well as specialized vehicles. These vehicles can be packaged with maintenance and fuel management programs, to help reduce your total operating costs even further.

For additional information, please contact:

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## TEXTING WHILE DRIVING: A MAJOR NO-NO!

Driving while texting on an electronic device is the newest driver distraction danger. A recent study by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (VTTI) revealed that 80 percent of crashes and 65 percent of near-crashes involve some form of driver distraction occurring within three seconds before the crash. According to the NHTSA and VTTI study, the principal distraction that led to vehicle crashes include:

- Cell phone use.
- Reaching for moving objects inside the vehicle.
- Looking at an object or event outside the vehicle.
- Reading while driving.
- Applying makeup.

Cell phones with text-messaging capabilities further increase the risk of driver distraction.

In December 2006, a 71-year-old woman was awarded \$4.1 million because a company driver ran a red light. He was distracted by his BlackBerry's navigation, which he was using to help locate his destination, and crashed into the woman, leaving her with serious and permanent injuries. The situation would have been avoided had the driver kept his eyes on the road and both hands on the steering wheel.

### Safety Concerns Keep Fleets on Guard

Increasingly, fleet managers rank driver safety among their top two challenges (after the cost of fuel). One reason for the heightened concern, fleet managers report, is an increase in preventable accidents, with the root cause of driver distraction. A contributing factor to these preventable accidents is the increased workload of the company drivers.

Drivers multitasking while operating their company cars has become a common practice and is a major factor in driver distraction. Use of text messaging while driving is a dangerous habit. Drivers who engage in mobile texting spend about 400-percent more time taking their eyes off the road and are 70-percent less likely to stay in their lane, according to an Australian study.

It is not uncommon to see drivers resting a BlackBerry on top of the steering wheel while using their thumbs to tap in a text message. A driver talking on a cell phone can watch the road, but someone responding to a text message must stare at his or her hands.

In May 2007, the state of Washington passed the nation's first driving while texting (DWT) ban, followed by New Jersey and the City of Phoenix. Washington's state legislators took action after a 53-year-old male driver, checking his e-mail, caused a five-car pileup on Interstate 5 outside Seattle in December 2006, said the state representative Joyce McDonald. "I was able to use that accident and show it wasn't just young people doing this."

California enacted a cell phone law last July prohibiting driving while talking on handheld cell phones. State Senator Joe Simitian of Palo Alto, Calif., subsequently introduced a new bill to ban adult DWT. The state of California already prohibits 16- and 17-year-olds from using any device to talk or text while driving.

"Cell phones are the number one cause of distracted driving accidents in California. And accidents by drivers using handheld cell phones outnumber those driving hands-free by a ratio of something like 15 to one. The difference between hand-held and hands-free is the difference between life and death," Simitian told *Palo Alto Weekly*.

In 2007, the City of Phoenix jumped on the DWT ban bandwagon and Scottsdale also is considering such a ban.

Scottsdale Transportation Commission member condemned the practice of DWT, calling it "per se dangerous," "intolerable," and "unsafe."

### Bottom Line on Texting & Cell Phone Distractions

Text messaging is fine when you're sitting at an airport or at home, but not while driving. Fleets need to get ahead of the curve and proactively prohibit this activity. Drivers need to be placed on notice that there is zero tolerance to use these devices while driving a company vehicle. This is not only to safeguard the company and its assets, but also to protect the employee, a company's greatest asset.

*As featured in Automotive Fleet Jan. 2009 by Lisajoyce Vergara*

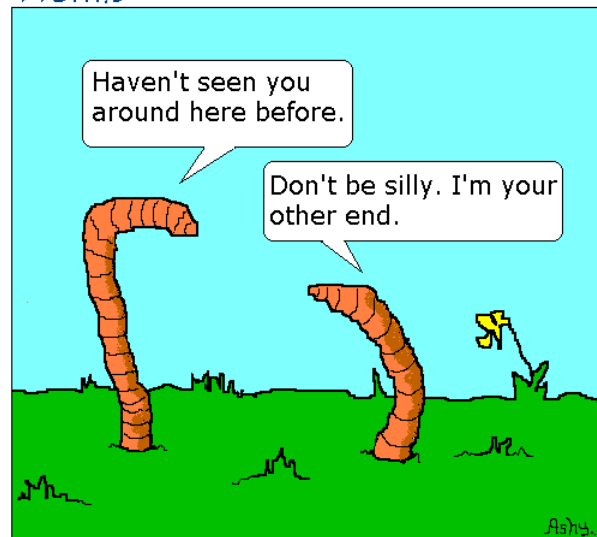


## GREEN TIP OF THE MONTH

### How can yesterday's table scraps feed hundreds?

Of worms, that is. Easy: Compost your organic waste and use the soil for your garden or houseplants for smiles all around.

#### Worms



#### Meals, not dumps.

A household can keep 500 lb of perfectly biodegradable kitchen and garden waste out of landfills every year (and most stuff doesn't decompose in landfills).

#### Fine botanical dining.

Composting recycles nutrients in your scraps, producing soil that's like a gourmet dinner for your plants.

#### It's as simple as 1-2-3-flora.

New in-kitchen compost gadgets make composting easy and isolate the stink, so your house won't smell like a barn. Some cities even offer curbside bin pickup (à la recycling bins).



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