

Monthly Newsletter June '09

Newsletter No. 0018

What's in This Month

Topic: GM Goes Bankrupt, Closes Pontiac

Tip: Replacing bushings Part 3 (Front)

Spotlight: Spotlight of the Month June 1978 Trans Am

Spotlight: Trans Am Plus

Classifieds



GM Goes Bankrupt, Closes Pontiac

On June 1st, General Motors filed the fourth largest bankruptcy case in history as part of a reorganization plan sanctioned and backed financially by the U.S. Government. Rather than make yet another loan, however, the federal government will receive a 60% ownership interest in exchange for an additional \$30 billion.

While the plan would seem to insure the future of GM by allowing it to retool and get out from under its massive debt, it is bad news for Metro Detroit. According to an article in The Detroit News, the Detroit area will see several plant closures: Pontiac assembly plant in October, 2009; Livonia engine plant in June, 2010; and the Flint North Components and the Willow Run transmission plant in December, 2010.

Two other plants in the Metro-Detroit area will be idled (closed, but on standby): the Lake Orion assembly plant will close in September and the Pontiac

stamping plant in December, 2010. This hopefully means that these plants will be retooled and reused.

President Obama made the announcement on Monday and made the point that the auto company crisis is part of a larger "financial crisis unlike any we've seen in our time." He also assured the public that the federal government has no intention of running the company and will seek a quick exit after restructuring.

So, is there any good news? According to President Obama, GM will produce a larger share of cars "here at home." For Metro Detroit specifically, the good news may be that the Hamtramck plant may be saved by the Chevy Volt.

General Motors announced plans Monday to cut 23,000 U.S. jobs by 2011, drop its storied Pontiac brand and slash 40% of its dealer network in its latest bid to stay out of bankruptcy. The moves are GM's latest efforts to cut costs and stem losses that have dogged its North American auto operations since 2005. But Monday's restructuring announcement goes much

further than the viability plan GM unveiled to President Obama's auto industry task force in February.

The company had announced many of the job cuts in February, but Monday's news that GM would have about 38,000 hourly U.S. employees by 2011 represents an additional reduction of 7,000 to 8,000 jobs beyond what GM disclosed in its previous viability plan.

The company said its goal is to cut costs to the level where GM can break even even with industrywide U.S. sales of only 10 million vehicles, rather than the 11.5 million to 12 million sales range that had been its previous break-even target.

Henderson added he's hoping that the company could be profitable as soon as 2010 under the new restructuring plan.

While the cuts will leave GM a much smaller company, Henderson said this does not concern him. He admitted that results at GM have not been acceptable for quite some time.

GM also confirmed reports that surfaced Friday and officially announced plans

to drop its Pontiac brand altogether. In its earlier restructuring plan, GM had signaled that Pontiac would survive, albeit as a niche offering.

The company also said it would make more cuts to its dealership network than it announced in February, and at a much faster pace. GM said Monday it will cut the number of its dealers by 42% to 3,605 by 2010, up from its original plan to reduce its network to 4,100 dealers by 2014.

I have gotten a few questions from people asking, "Hey, with Pontiac going under.... does that mean our cars will be worth more money?". I can't answer that, but I know my Trans Am is no Picasso, or no Andy Warhol.



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Replacing your Bushings.... Part 3 (Front)

Well, we have covered the rear bushings and the body bushings over the last two months, now it is time to tackle the front suspension and bushings. Sorry to tell you that the front is a little more detailed than the previous two jobs.. I guess that is why I saved it for last. Get your feet wet with the easy stuff to give you confidence to be able to take on the front end of your car.

Now as with the previous projects you tackle as much or as little as money will allow you to. You can simply replace the bushing on the front end, or you can go further and also replace all of the suspension parts such as springs, shocks, tie rods, ball joints, end links, and more. I guess it is all about how much you want to spend and how confident you are in replacing these parts. You can purchase a complete front suspension kit which includes upper and lower ball joints, outer tie rod ends, upper and lower control arm bushings, end link kit and front sway bar kit for about \$190.

This I think will get you the best bang for your buck. It will replace that worn out front end and give your car new life. As stated before, you can replace the parts with the factory rubber or the poly-urethane depending on your application. The Urethane kits are about \$20-\$30 more expensive. Most of these components are connected to each other so it is also a good idea to replace them all at the same time and get it all done at once.

Make sure you have the car up on jack stands and well supported on the front end. Remove the tires and get all your tools and new parts ready and make sure you have blocked off about 4 hours or so of your day. The replace the ball joints you will need a press which you can get (rent) from most local auto parts store for a small fee. If you are replacing the control arm bushings, then you will also need to get a spring press to remove the front springs. You can start by removing the calipers and brakes and backing plate to be able to remove the ball joints from the control arms. You can now get in there will the spring press and use it to compress the front spring to allow you to remove it safely. You also want to now remove the front shocks as well be removing the two top and bottom bolts from the control arms. If you wanted to spend the extra cash, you can purchase new



shocks and springs for about \$100 each set. Remove the pins and nuts from the ball joints and you can use some of the tools in the press to be able to press (or pound) them out. You also want to remove the end links from the stabilizer bar as well to get them out of the way. The control arms will now be free and you can remove them by the lower bolts that runs through the frame and also accessing the top bolts through the engine compartment or through the wheel well. You can now also remove the front brackets for the stabilizer bar attached to the front frame and drop that out of the way. The last thing you have to remove is the outer tie rod. You will need to take a crayon or maker to mark the position of the tie rod when removed. That way when you install the new outer tie rod, you can roughly spin it into the same location.

such as the bushings and can simply be put in place of the old ones that you removed. The two exceptions to this are the tie rods and the ball joints. The ball joints will need to be pressed back into location.... that was the reason for renting the press to be able to press these back into the control arms. You need to make sure they go in straight or it will throw everything off. The outer tie rods can be roughly set back into location, but to be sure, after you do this, you should take your car up to a professional to have the front end aligned again. Usually front end alignments are fairly inexpensive... less than \$80.

Now we have tackled all aspects of replacing your bushings and suspension parts. Like I mentioned before, you can go as far as you want to or as far as money will allow with the replacing of all of the parts.

Now that you have everything removed that you need removed, you can start the process of installing all of the new parts to replace the old. Most of them are simple





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Spotlight of the Month - 1978 Trans Am of Brian C

June is here already and I remembered pictures of this months car on the forum from last year as the car was in a summer setting. The car was photographed so well I couldn't think of a better car or a nicer person to spotlight than Brian Carter's beautiful Y88. He's known as "brian c" here on the forum. Brian has been on this forum for two years. His personality on this forum is a great addition and his knowledge of these cars helps others here. Here are some of the pictures he took of his car that I found outstanding. Brian's car is a 1978 Y88, '70 455 HO block bored 0.060, TH350, 3.42:1 gears. It's easy to see why his car was chosen for Fbodywarehouse's 2008 Calendar as his car was selected for October. His car is stunning. So congratulations to brian c, and I did run this by the Hitman and he agrees, for having the Hitman's Spotlight car of the month for June 2009.

Spotlight of the Month - Performance Years

Rizzi's Auto Parts was Established in 1975 Jim and Bob Rizzi Sr. in White Plains, NY. Bob Sr. originally raced Chevelles in the late 1960's and Early 1970's at professional drag strips in Long Island, NY and his interest in serving people in the automotive industry had branched off from racing. His son, Rob Jr's interest in cars started when he was a child. Rob Jr. always had a passion for Chevrolets and the Pontiac Trans Am. He has restored two classic musclecars, a 1970 Chevelle SS454, and a 1979 Pontiac Trans Am. Following the direction of technology and the future of the internet, Bob Sr. and Rob Jr. have created Trans Am Plus, a branch of Rizzi's Auto Parts to offer top quality name brand parts that you can trust, at unbeatable prices for owners of the Pontiac Trans Am.

You can visit Trans Am Plus for all your Suspension, drivetrain and brake parts. They sell top quality name brand parts for your 1967-2002 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am. Specializing in MOOG Suspension parts, you can be assured you will receive excellent reliable parts you can trust for easy installation, strength and unbeatable ride quality.



You can check out the full story on the Forum.



Classifieds

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Want to sell your car in the Monthly Newsletter here at 78ta.com? Send an email to Sales@78ta.com for more information. List your car for sale that reaches over 100,000 people each and every month.

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2001 Pontiac WS6 Trans Am \$22,000 or best offer Stored Winters, 18k Miles, Never smoked in, T-tops, Loaded, Super Clean Regular Oil Changes, Never Hot Rodded Jim email jwiles1@live.com



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1978 W-72, 4-speed, 3:73 posi rear, Non T-Top, @100K. Corbeau front seats, new carpet, Center line rims, 235/60/15 in front. 255/60/15 in the rear, runs great..but, has no mufflers installed. Will come with not installed stock intake/carb, shaker hood scoop, 160 speed-o, hooker headers, new rebuilt dual spring heads, mild cam, Comp cam roller rockers, push rods, timing chain set, cherry bomb header mufflers, a/c parts that where taking off, extra tail lights, grill inserts. This is a low numbers W-72 package car \$10K OBO E-mail ? at eckfamily4@msn.com

