

Plans for GM-20 compact car series announced

United Press International
LANSING, Mich. — General Motors Corp. outlined Wednesday the details of a new series of front-wheel drive, compact cars that will substitute for ill-fated X-cars in the model line-up at two divisions.

The automaker insisted vehicles, dubbed the GM-20 series, are not replacements for the X-car models. But trade publications say the Oldsmobile Omega and Pontiac Phoenix models

will be discontinued after the 1984 model year.

Their place in the GM lineup will be taken by GM-20 models called the Oldsmobile Calais and Pontiac Grand Am. The series also includes the Buick Somerset Regal.

GM will continue to offer the Buick Skylark and Chevrolet Citation X-car models. The Phoenix and Omega models were the slowest sellers of the X-cars, which were the first front-wheel drive autos intro-

duced by GM in 1979.

X-car sales have dropped dramatically in light of alleged brake lockup problems on 1980 models. GM currently is fighting a Justice Department suit seeking a recall of all 1.1 million 1980 models and penalties of \$4 million.

GM is keeping the GM-20 models under wraps until production begins. However, the cars reportedly will be about three inches shorter than the current X-car models and

weigh about the same.

Available on the cars will be a 2.5 liter four-cylinder model and a V-6. Transmissions include a five-speed manual and a three-speed automatic, a source said.

GM is spending \$250 million to revamp two assembly plants and a Fisher Body plant in the Oldsmobile complex, which is the largest single assembly plant operation in North America. It is the first time the Oldsmobile

facility has built anything besides that nameplate since the automaker began building cars in 1897.

To make way for the GM-20 models, Oldsmobile halted production at Lansing of the rear-wheel drive Oldsmobile Cutlass, the nation's top-selling car. The autos are still built in Arlington, Texas, and Ste. Therese, Quebec.

The renovation has forced

the layoff of 4,800 workers. Around 2,300 will be called back to work on three shifts when the plants resume production this summer.

Union officials said another 1,500 should eventually be called back to work if a fourth shift is added. This would mean a net loss of 1,000 jobs.

United Auto Workers Local 652 President Gary Watson said his members are "scared" because of the layoffs, but said cutbacks now may mean job se-

curity for others in the future.

Oldsmobile General Manager Joseph Sanchez added the automaker "knows with confidence that the change to GM-20 is absolutely right for this facility."

Quality problems held up production of new luxury C-cars at GM's new Orion Township, Mich., and Wentzville, Mo., plants. But Sanchez said the GM-20 models "are going to be on time and we are not going to have any problems."

Homes, stores destroyed by tornado in Port Arthur

United Press International
PORT ARTHUR — Emergency crews spent most of the day Wednesday working to fix power and telephone lines damaged by a tornado that destroyed several houses and one store, a police spokesman said.

"Probably two or three dozen houses were damaged and a half dozen were destroyed" by the tornado which spun through the Port Acres area on the northwest side of Port Arthur at 11:30 p.m. Tuesday, Patrolman David Cagle said. "Numerous houses got extensive damage and there were a lot with minor damage."

It was a miracle no one was injured, he said.

"We're real lucky," he said. "There were people sleeping in one of the houses when it was destroyed. The good lord was on their side."

"It set down in three or four places. It kind of hopped," Cagle said. "First, it touched down in a residential area on the north side of town, then went back up and came down in the

business district on West Port Arthur Road. That's where it did the most extensive damage, along two blocks of businesses."

"Then, it picked up and hit some more houses on the northwest side of town," he said.

No damage estimate was available, he said.

Roofs of at least 12 homes were damaged by the high winds and a convenience store was demolished, police said.

"It's totally flattened," Cagle said of the store.

At the height of the storm, about 1,200 people were without power.

"The whole Port Acres area was out of power from last night to this morning and they're still working on power lines out there and also the telephones," Cagle said. "All the phones in that area were out."

Most of the service was restored by Wednesday afternoon.

Residents whose houses were destroyed moved in with neighbors or relatives, he said.

"I hope it's not a sign of what's to come the rest of the year," he said.

Across the rest of the state, the National Weather Service said a front moving into west Texas Wednesday night would bring little chance of rain to that area, but could mean more dust from west Texas migrating eastward.

Mid-afternoon temperatures Wednesday were in the high 70s in the northeast, the Panhandle and the southeast. It was much warmer in south and west Texas where readings in the upper 80s and a few mid-90s were reported.

Blustery winds in west Texas and the High Plains were blowing 25 to 30 mph and gusty from the west or southwest. North central areas had 10 to 20 mph southerly winds and mostly southerly winds around 10 mph were blowing in the eastern half of the state.

The forecast called for the front to move rapidly eastward and arrive in central Texas Thursday afternoon.

Lucas, Toole tied to another unsolved murder of woman

United Press International
TYLER — Statements from confessed mass killer Henry Lee Lucas and his traveling companion Otis Toole helped clear an unsolved Smith County murder, Sheriff Frank Brunt said Wednesday.

Brunt said he is convinced Lucas and Toole killed Nanette Warren on Feb. 4, 1980. She was hanging out the family wash at her Smith County residence when gunned down from a passing car.

The sheriff said Toole admitted trying to scare the woman with a gun. Brunt said the break came when his deputies traveled to Jacksonville, Fla., to interview Toole in the state prison cell about several unsolved murders.

He said subsequent statements by Toole, and confirmed by Lucas, led to the case being presented to the district attorney.

The death of 36-year-old Katherine Powell in Smith County earlier was attributed to Lucas and Toole, and the pair have been indicted for capital

murder in her rape and murder in her home.

Lucas, convicted of three murders and admitting to more than 350 others, was nearing the end of another murder trial Wednesday. A jury in San Angelo was to receive the case that involved the strangulation of an unidentified woman hitchhiker.

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(Illustration of a rabbit and baskets)

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(Illustration of a globe with people on top)

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