R-e-s-p-e-c-t: Car dealers

Publisher: Automotive News Year: 1993

Motor Co. by other ways to cooperate.

The Detroit News said Friday, Sept. 19, that Chrysler was "looking out of negotiations with its Big 3 competitors to design and produce an electric car after enlisting it could build a vehicle more cheaply on its own." Chrysler denied the story. "There is no story," said Chris Press, a Chrysler spokesman. "The talks have not ceased. The negotiations are still going on, and it's unhealthy the level of cooperation will reach a point where we'd make a vehicle together," Mary Buremoff, a GM spokeswoman, confirmed that Chrysler has not left the bargaining table.

-Jack Knesel

Jaguars join Budget fleet

Jaguar dealers are looking forward to buying 500 XJS program cars that will be sold at closeout prices next spring. The sedans will be sold after six months of service in Budget Rent A Car's fleet. "Two years ago nobody would have thought Jaguars were reliable enough to put into rental fleets," said Martin Bonnell, owner of Transcendent Motors Cars in Nashville. "Budget will go on sale in November." - Charles M. Thomas

GM said to have buyer for plants

"General Motors may sell one of its parts plants to a Cleveland-based company," according to a report in the Detroit Free Press. American Axle, a Cleveland investment group, is looking to buy the plants from GM, the report said. GM spokesman Jerry Holmes would not confirm that an offer was made by American Axle and said the plants are still for sale. Richard Daukus, a former executive vice-president of manufacturing at Chrysler Corp. and James McLaughlin, a Ford Motor Co. employee, are going on a wild gallop for the new Mustang that will go on sale in December. Top executives, including Chairman Edsel Ford, will visit 100 cities on Oct. 17 and 18 trying out the pony car's imminent arrival. The races will visit one city each in what will amount to the biggest blow Ford has done for a vehicle introduction, a Ford spokesman said. On Oct. 17, there will be parties and picnics for various Mustang clubs around the country. On Oct. 18, Ford boosters will visit media outlets and other organizations. The Mustang goes on sale Dec. 3.

NO 'GREEN' NEON — Chrysler Corp. President Bob Lutz is happy about the environmental responsibility shown by Chrysler's new Neon, but the company won't push the idea in ads. "Most people will be a little disappointed with the green ad," said Lutz told Detroit's Automotive Press Association at a press breakfast in Frankfurt.

R-E-S-P-E-C-T — What do new-car dealers have in common with Rodney Dangerfield and André Frédic? They too want a little respect — from manufacturers. That's according to a survey of 417 dealers in the United States, and 265 dealers in the Netherlands conducted for Pennsylvania State University's Institute for the Study of Business Markets. "Our survey...shows that to the dealers, respect and being treated fairly by their more powerful partners are the most important things to manufacturers, and relatively more important than earnings or other tangible rewards," said Dr. W. Benjamin, assistant professor of marketing at Penn State.

SUPER TOP SECRET — The White House and the Big 3 were talking last week about the secretive "car of the future" talk held Sept. 3 between the three Detroit CEOs and Vice President Al Gore. The White House meeting was part of a Big 3-Wide safety effort to forge a $1 billion joint research effort aimed at producing a zero-emission, high fuel economy passenger car. "There are no announcements, and nothing is imminent," said Chrysler spokesman John Gunston. As for the automakers and the White House, both groups have put proposals on the table. In addition, they're trying to overcome years of distrust over environmental and fuel economy issues. There is still a tension and trust factor that needs to