

## **Restructured PROBUS President's Tour**

*Revised June 1, 2019 by Kirk Benson*

The proposed President's Tour to the GM Heritage Center in Sterling Heights has been restructured and the dates have changed. The original plan was an all-inclusive three day, two night motor coach tour departing from Mississauga on Wednesday, September 4 and returning on Friday evening, September 6. After two months of marketing, only 19 of the minimum 30 people had registered with Time of Your Life Tours (TOYL). GM Heritage is not flexible with the 30 people minimum for opening the museum and the cost per person of running a large inter-city coach with fewer than 30 participants is prohibitive. TOYL will refund 100% of all deposits made with them for the original tour.

Fortunately, there is a "Plan B". A restructured, self-driving, Probus President's tour will run two weeks earlier from Wednesday, August 21 returning Friday, August 23. GM Heritage has another group booked for Friday at 11:00 a.m. and we can piggyback with them. The self-driving aspect will lower the cost per person and provide added flexibility for the participants. The hotel has changed the date for our block of rooms and has maintained a group rate.

With TOYL out of the loop, anyone wishing to participate in the restructured tour will need to book their hotel room directly with the Holiday Inn Express & Suites Sterling Heights, 8515 15 Mile Road, Sterling Heights, MI 48312. Phone (586) 272-2300. Make your individual reservation using your personal credit card with reference to the "Probus President's Tour" block of rooms. The rates are \$US119 for a premium king and \$US109 for a double. Alternatively, you can book online using the following booking link: [Probus President's Tour](#). When you click the link, the hotel's landing page will appear. Put in the arrival and departure dates, click search/availability, the group's room type and discount rate will appear, proceed with reservation until a confirmation # is provided. August is their busy season so please book without delay. Ten rooms have been set aside for our group.

The highlights remain unchanged from the original plan. Wednesday afternoon we will see the Ford Rouge River plant in Detroit. Thursday is a full day at the Gilmore Museum in Hickory Corners. Friday we will visit the General Motors Heritage Center in Sterling Heights then Stahls Auto and Historic Music Machine Museum in Chesterfield.

Ford Rouge River is a self-guided tour <https://www.thehenryford.org/visit/ford-rouge-factory-tour/> featuring the Legacy Theatre, Manufacturing Innovation Theatre, Assembly Plant Walking Tour and Legacy Gallery. There is no parking at the Rouge for private vehicles which means we will park at the Henry Ford Museum and take a shuttle bus.

The Gilmore Museum <https://www.gilmorecarmuseum.org> is not a single building, but a whole campus with multiple buildings housing separate collections. The main Heritage Centre will have a special exhibit "Duesenberg: Celebrating an American Classic". On the same site are the following: Classic Car Club of America Museum, Pierce-Arrow Museum, The H H Franklin Collection, Model A Ford Museum, Cadillac-LaSalle Club Museum and the Lincoln Motor Car Heritage Museum. Lunch is available on site at the Blue Moon Diner or the Heritage Café.

Now that the participants are driving their personal vehicles, this introduces a great deal of flexibility into the tour. As an alternative to the Gilmore Museum, Detroit has many attractions for motor heads. The largest and most famous is The Henry Ford and the adjoining Greenfield Village <https://www.thehenryford.org/>. "Prepare to be Astounded; 250 acres of unexpected" is their catch phrase.

The GM Heritage Center <https://www.gmheritagecenter.com> serves as a showplace for the vehicles of the GM Heritage Collection and as the permanent home for the corporation's collection of historic literature and artefacts. Located in an 81,000 square foot facility, the Center has more than 165 vehicles on display. Each of the vehicles in the Collection illustrates a design, technical or sales milestone or accomplishment in the history of General Motors or automotive history.

Stahl's Auto and Historic Music Machine Museum <http://www.stahlsauto.com> located in Chesterfield (between Sterling Heights and Sarnia) will open its doors and provide a guide just for the President's Tour. Not only is this a great car museum with many significant cars such as the Tucker, but hearing music machines like the Belgian 1924 Mortier 97 Key Dance Organ is an experience not to be missed.

This tour will no longer have the fixed itinerary and rigid schedules that are required with a motor coach and driver. The downside of the added flexibility is that the participants will have to take much more responsibility. You will need to individually book the hotel. Participants will pay their own admission to the Rouge and Gilmore while GM Heritage and Stahls each require a single payment for which I will seek reimbursement. If there is sufficient interest, I will make reservations for group dinners on Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

It will NOT be a "follow the leader" drive as this is best done in vehicles equipped with CB radios. Therefore, GPS navigation with the destinations saved in advance is highly recommended. The recommended Wednesday routing is 401 to Windsor/Detroit, parking at The Henry Ford to take a shuttle to the Ford Rouge Plant, then drive to the hotel in Sterling Heights.

On Thursday, the Gilmore Museum in Hickory Corners is a 2½ drive on interstate highways from Sterling Heights. The Henry Ford is a much more conveniently located for those who do not want to spend a lot of time driving. On Friday, GM Heritage is near the hotel in Sterling Heights. The museum will open for us at 11:00 a.m. Expect to spend a couple of hours there. Stahls Automotive Foundation is located in Chesterfield, about ½ hour from GM in the direction of Port Huron/Sarnia. We will stop for a late lunch on the way. Stahls will open especially for our group from 3:00 to 4:30. That will be the last stop on the tour. Under good conditions, Mississauga is four hours away.

Anyone wishing to participate should let me know when you have booked your room at the Holiday Inn. To do so, or for further information about the tour, please contact Kirk Benson at [knosneb@rogers.com](mailto:knosneb@rogers.com). or 416-706-2204.