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## Car buffs already eyeing next year's Dream Cruise

**The Detroit News**

Saying goodbye to the Woodward Dream Cruise wasn't hard for some because they already are looking toward 2010.

"The cars may be getting older, but the event isn't," said George Moody of Center Line.

Moody grabbed stares Saturday at the annual cruise with his 1965 Chevrolet Impala, which sports a custom blue paint job.

"I am a car buff," he said. "I love this. This is what we do."

From Ferndale's Mustang Alley to Royal Oak's Northwood Shopping Center -- the cruise's epicenter -- car enthusiasts from around the world came with their lawn chairs and cameras and checked out the vintage Camaros, Corvettes, Firebirds and Thunderbirds. Many wore hats and sunglasses to shield them from the hot sun, and sunblock was in ample supply.

Brian Meissen of Macomb Township, who runs a Web site dedicated to Camaro and Firebird car lovers, said he plans to return next year with another caravan of friends. Members of his group brought 30 cars and had tents along the route.

More than 1 million people and 40,000 classic cars were expected at the cruise, which began as a fundraiser to get money for a soccer field in Ferndale and has since grown into an event that garners international attention.

Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard said Saturday evening that the crowd seemed a little thinner than years past, but there still seemed to be a good number of people out enjoying the day. He did not have an official crowd estimate Saturday night. Sgt. Joe Lambourn said Saturday night around 9 p.m. that there had been no Dream Cruise related arrests.

For Moody, the cruise was all about showing off his prize -- the Impala, which he has put only 1,000 miles on since buying it in 2000. Usually it stays in the garage, he said.

Looking out at a sea of American car muscle, Ron Fondaw was floored by his first visit to the

cruise. It may have been the Dayton resident's first cruise, but it wouldn't be his last.

"This is incredible," said Fondaw, a parts adviser for Volkswagen who is restoring a 1967 Ford Mustang and visited Ford's Mustang Alley in Ferndale. "I'll definitely be back next year. ... My heart's with American iron -- the faster, the better."

Fondaw was one of tens of thousands who packed Woodward despite hot, muggy temperatures that neared 90 and had fewer corporate sponsors.

GM, which normally rents out the entire Athens Coney Island and its parking lot, didn't rent any parking space this year and didn't providing any vehicles, said a GM spokeswoman last week.

But Greg Mitchell, co-owner of the Athens Coney Island, didn't complain. He rented the restaurant and parking lot to roughly five GM dealers who put vintage cars in the lot and used the restaurant for a fundraiser for the Leukemia Society.

He said business "isn't quite as busy" as it was when GM rented his restaurant. "In a serious economic downturn, it's nice that people are still willing to do this," Mitchell said.

*Reporters Tom Greenwood, Ursula Watson, Mike Wilkinson, Doug Guthrie and Maureen Feighan contributed to this story.*

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