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## **Walter P. Chrysler Museum's *Dodge Legends* Exhibit Celebrates the All-New Charger's Bold Heritage**

**Auburn Hills, Mich.** – The bold automotive heritage that was launched with the Dodge Brothers first touring car in 1915, and lives on in the all-new 2006 Dodge Charger, is showcased in *Dodge Legends*, a special exhibition running May 24 – Aug. 21 at the Walter P. Chrysler Museum in Auburn Hills, Mich.

Celebrating more than eight decades of automotive engineering and design excellence, *Dodge Legends* features 19 significant vehicles that build on the brand's early reputation for unprecedented dependability to also embrace the tough, fast, powerful and street-smart image it revels in today.

These bold characteristics converge in the new 2006 Dodge Charger. *Dodge Legends* heralds the introduction of the new Charger, which has all the makings of a new legend. The Charger races forward with true sports car performance, modern coupe styling and four-door functionality. A bold front, strong shoulders and fast back grab the attention of muscle car enthusiasts, while the car's performance, handling and modern HEMI® V-8 power complete the package.

Among the other exhibition vehicles that spotlight Dodge heritage are:

- **1996 Dodge Viper GTS** – The original Viper roadster was tapped as the Indianapolis 500 pace car in 1991. The introduction of the GTS version resulted in a second pace car appearance just five years later.
- **1970 Dodge Challenger T/A** – In 1966 the Sports Car Club of America created the Trans-American road racing series for “production small sedans” and GM and Ford eagerly showcased their “pony cars.” With the debut of the Challenger, Dodge's first pony car, and the third generation Barracuda, Chrysler also entered Trans-Am racing.
- **1968 Dodge Charger** – Completely restyled from previous models, this Charger became known as the “Coke bottle” design—featuring a new roof line and hidden headlights.
- **1956 Dodge Royal Lancer D-500** – The D-500 was a pivotal car for Dodge, and marked the brand's transition from conservative family vehicles to absolute race-ready performance cars, making Dodge a serious contender in NASCAR, forever transforming Dodge's image.
- **1939 Dodge Town Coupe** – Dodge celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the introduction of this vehicle with all-new styling, evoking the glamour of ocean travel by dubbing them “Luxury Liners.”
- **1929 Dodge Senior Six Roadster** – The first full year of Chrysler Corporation ownership of Dodge Brothers resulted in the elevation of the company's Senior models to a level of luxury not seen in any previous Dodge vehicles. An important engineering feature of 1929 Dodge vehicles was the industry's first downdraft carburetion system to enter mass production, creating higher horsepower and easier starting.

- **1915 Dodge Brothers Touring Car** – The oldest car in the exhibition heralds the Dodge Brothers conversion from the world’s largest supplier of automobile parts to manufacturers of their own car. It was met with such enthusiastic success that the Dodge Brothers became the third largest manufacturer of cars in their first full year of business.

*Dodge Legends* also offers a perspective of many aspects of Dodge lore and legend:

- The Dodge Brothers launched their car with an innovative advertising campaign that became a classic. Legendary adman Theodore McManus simply rented billboards across the country. On them first appeared the words “Dodge Brothers.” After time had elapsed, sign painters returned to add “Motor Cars” as the next line. After another curiosity-building interval they returned to add the final line: “Dependable.” The campaign brilliantly capitalized on the Dodges’ fame as suppliers of Model T mechanical parts, and generated intense public interest. The cars backed it up.

- The Dodge Brothers never tried to sell cars based on top speed; their first car “chugged” out of their plant in 1914 with an engine whose basic design lasted until 1928. But they built a durable car and drive train, and that made Dodge cars suitable for racing, especially rough and tumble dirt track racing. By the 1920s Dodge vehicles—some fitted with special 16-valve overhead cam cylinder heads sold by makers of racing equipment—were a familiar and successful fixture on dirt tracks.

- Dodge cars remained “dependable” and, by extension, practical into the 1950s when American affluence made “practical” obsolete in the U.S. market. Virgil Exner revamped Dodge’s fusty styling for 1954 and Dodge’s version of Chrysler’s HEMI V-8—dubbed the “Red Ram”—also became available. Dodge’s suddenly sporty image led to its first Indianapolis 500 pace car. Soon Dodge was selling its own version of the Chrysler 300, the D-500. From there NASCAR, drag racing and, ultimately, Vipers running at LeMans, were part of the Dodge image.

The 55,000 square foot Walter P. Chrysler Museum is on DaimlerChrysler’s Auburn Hills, Mich. complex. The Museum offers three stories of more than 65 vintage, classic, muscle and concept vehicles interspersed with interactive displays and historical exhibits. The Museum also features a 125-seat movie theater highlighting three continuously running short films and a gift shop brimming with exclusive and hard-to-find scale models and collectibles.

The Walter P. Chrysler Museum is located at Featherstone and Squirrel Roads and is accessible from I-75 at exit 78.

Museum admission is \$6 for adults and \$3 for seniors and children 6 – 12. Admission for children five and younger is free and group rates are available. There is no additional charge for *Dodge Legends*.

The Museum is open 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. Tuesday – Saturday and noon – 6 p.m. Sunday.

Visit the Museum’s Web site at [www.chryslerheritage.com](http://www.chryslerheritage.com) or call 888-456-1924 for further information.

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Additional information and news from DaimlerChrysler is available on the Internet at: [www.media.daimlerchrysler.com](http://www.media.daimlerchrysler.com)