

## **UAW VP Nominated For Seat On GM Board**

Tom Krisher, AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) -- For the first time, General Motors Co. could have an official of the United Auto Workers union on its board of directors.

UAW Vice President Joe Ashton was nominated to a board seat controlled by a UAW trust fund that pays retiree health care bills. He plans to retire from his union post in June.

The move, which would be considered common in Europe, is a first for General Motors, and a sign of how the relationship between the company and the union has changed in the past decade. Before that, the UAW battled with the company over wages, benefits and work rules, squeezing out as much as it could for members regardless of GM's finances. Now, the two often work together to boost quality and control costs, with workers getting a slice of company profits every year.

If elected at the company's annual meeting on June 10 in Detroit, Ashton would replace former GM Vice Chairman Steve Girsky as the trust's voice on the board. Girsky, now a paid adviser to the company, has been nominated by the GM board to stay on with a different seat.

After the election, GM would have 12 board members, 10 from outside the company.

The Detroit automaker made the announcement Friday in its annual proxy filing with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

If elected, Ashton would begin his board term in August.

"Joe brings a wealth of knowledge from his work across many industries, especially his deep understanding how labor strategy can contribute to a company's success," board Chairman Tim Solso said in a statement. Ashton has been a UAW member since 1969.

Ashton served as the UAW's vice president in charge of GM and led the union's negotiating team in the 2011 contract talks. In that contract, longtime union workers got no pay raise but received a share of GM's profits. Earlier this year they received \$7,500 each based on GM's 2013 earnings. Also in the contract, newly hired workers who are paid a much lower hourly rate than older workers got pay raises.

The union agreed to both the retiree health care trust and the lower wages for new hires to help GM and the other Detroit automakers when they were in financial trouble about a decade ago.

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