

The Making of An Auto Show

Displays Trucked in From All Over the Country

While the facility and show producers locally have been gearing up for the Central Valley New Car Dealers biggest annual fundraiser, many of the large manufacturer's displays have been under construction since early this year.

The making of auto shows is big business. From the granddaddy of all the American shows, The Detroit Auto Show, to auto shows in much smaller markets – the preparation for putting all the pieces together takes well over a year.

There are auto show exhibit houses throughout the country. They create displays kits for all manufacturer – supported shows in the United States. The kits can contain the display structures, turntables, lights, signs and counter tops. The displays are first designed as scale architectural models, and each year features a new theme.

There are three different models created to accommodate different show sizes and ceiling height requirements. Models done for the Detroit show can include escalators and be up to three stories high. These models are created in a high-security environment, as the manufacturers like to keep their Detroit displays a secret until the show opens.

Once the models are completed, the displays are manufactured in large warehouses and assembled just as they would be on the floor of an auto show. Numerous versions of the same display are manufactured so auto shows running simultaneously will have the same display. The displays are then crated in huge boxes close to the size of an eighteen wheeler container, loaded into semis, and driven all over the country for the duration of the auto show season, approximately eight months.

When the trucks arrive at the show facility, a company that handles the building set-up will already have been at work– laying carpet and setting up electrical outlets. The crates are unloaded from the trucks and fork-lifted to the appropriate manufacturer space. From there, specially- trained crews take the materials and build the display. After the display has been finished, which can take several days, the cars are driven in. Some of the vehicles are shipped in and others come from the local dealer's lot.

The manufacturer's representatives, or show narrators as they are also called, will start to arrive the day before the show. When the show opens the following day, the lights will be up, the cars sparkling clean, the turntables spinning and the narrators in place.