

EVENTS

Mercedes-Benz marks 125th anniversary by supporting Hurricane Katrina relief efforts

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By KAITLYN BONNEVILLE

Mercedes-Benz USA executives and dealers met in New Orleans to celebrate the luxury automaker's 125th anniversary by planting 125 trees in New Orleans City Park.

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The effort supports clean-up and repairs from the destruction of Hurricane Katrina across New Orleans and within City Park. More than 170 Mercedes-Benz employees, as well as the owner of the New Orleans Saints, Tom Benson, helped Mercedes-Benz plant the trees.

Ernst Lieb, president/CEO of Mercedes-Benz USA, Montvale, NJ said in a statement to the press that the automaker hopes the trees bring a sense of renewal to the local residents and tourists that visit the park and that they are a symbol of growth and resiliency for New Orleans. He said that the city has a bright future despite the setback caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Mercedes-Benz USA is headquartered in Montvale, NJ. It heads the luxury car maker's sales, marketing and customer service. Mercedes-Benz did not respond by press deadline.

New Orleans City Park lost much of its forestation during Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

Mercedes-Benz supplied City Park with the trees, landscape material and man power necessary to install the landscaping.

It is one of the country's largest urban parks. It is 1,300 acres and sees over 11 million visitors annually. It is the largest recreation area for New Orleans.

Cause marketing

Luxury automotive brands have been incorporating cause marketing into their strategies lately.

For example, Maserati teamed up with the Columbus Citizens Foundation of New York to raffle of a 2011 Maserati GranTourismo Convertible in support of scholarships.

Four hundred raffle tickets were sold at \$1,000 each and the Foundation disperses approximately \$2 million each year ([see story](#)).

BMW recently partnered with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and Museum for a six-year, worldwide initiative to investigate issues affecting urban life ([see story](#)).

Lexus launched its Eco Challenge, encouraging students to find solutions to economic issues and offering a hefty scholarship as the prize ([see story](#)).

The effort made by Mercedes-Benz will help in the overall rebuilding of New Orleans.

Bob Becker, CEO of New Orleans City Park, New Orleans, said in a statement to the press that the landscaping throughout the park is instrumental in creating a place that people want to visit. He said that after losing so many trees during Hurricane Katrina, it is great to see 125 new trees in the park.

Final Take

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