

Eyes (and Votes) of Texas Are on 2013 Ram 1500

by Jim Stickford

The Texas Auto Writers Association (TAWA) awarded the 2013 Ram 1500 its prestigious "Truck of Texas" award following their 20th annual Texas Truck Rodeo near San Antonio, Texas, on Oct. 20 and 21.



Ram 1500s drive to victory

Nick Cappa, with Ram Truck Communications, said the award is a big deal in the world of pickup trucks because one in five trucks sold in this country are sold in the state of Texas.

class horsepower. "It comes standard with the eight-speed transmission," Cappa said.

Texas is so important a truck market, Cappa said, that Ram even has a trim line that can be ordered only in Texas. It is similar to the big horn trim line.

But that's just some of the improved and high-quality features that come with the Ram 1500.

Winning TAWA's "Truck of Texas" award was no walk in the park, Cappa said. There were more than 50 jurors judging vehicles submitted by manufacturers. They spent two days driving all the vehicles and comparing the rides with each other. The jurors then cast their ballots electronically at the end of the second day.

Other features and improvements include:

- New eight-speed also available with the 5.7-liter HEMI V8 – the automaker's first application with a V8 (TorqueFlite 8 late availability).

- Class-exclusive eight-speed automatic transmission (TorqueFlite 8) standard equipment with 3.6-liter Pentastar V6 engine, doubling the amount of gears compared with previously available four-speed automatic transmissions to greatly improve fuel economy and contribute to best-in-class standard V6 towing.

- New TorqueFlite 8 operated by an innovative dash-mounted, rotary e-shift design.

- First-in-segment Fuel Saver Technology: eight-speed automatic transmission, stop-start, thermal management system, pulse-width modulation and active aerodynamics, including grille shutters and air suspension.

"We didn't know that we were going to win the 'Truck of Texas' award when we came down," Cappa said. "It was a real surprise to all of us."

"You've got to love how tough, capable, comfortable and fuel-efficient this new truck is," said Michael Herzing, TAWA president, "especially for Texans, who frequently drive long distances."

Cappa said they sent down more than one Ram truck model to TAWA's truck rodeo. But that the Ram 1500 ended up doing best of all their models didn't really surprise anyone.

"We have done so much to improve the 1500," Cappa said. "The new eight-speed transmission is smart, giving us a double-digit improvement in fuel economy for both the V6 and V8 engines."

And for the first time, the half-ton uses Chrysler's Pentastar engine. Cappa said it fits well in the Ram and gives the 1500 its best-in-

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