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2013 Chevy SS Rear-Wheel Drive Debuts on Zeta Platform

by Irena Granaas

While Metro Detroiters are bracing for the season of snowblowers and subzero temps, Chevrolet already has racing fans dreaming of spring with the recent unveiling of its eagerly anticipated 2013 NASCAR Chevrolet SS race car in Las Vegas.

The rear-wheel-drive performance sedan, powered by the legendary small block V8 engine is Chevrolet’s latest entry in the NASCAR Sprint Cup series during the 2013 SpeedWeeks in Daytona, Fla.

Racing action starts Feb. 16 and culminates with the Daytona 500 Feb. 24.

Performance car enthusiasts will have an additional boon to celebrate – Chevrolet has announced a new rear-wheel-drive performance sedan that closely resembles its NASCAR progenitor.

The 2014 consumer version of the Chevrolet SS is slated to debut early next year.

The NASCAR Chevrolet SS is the next of a long line of nameplates Chevrolet has used to challenge NASCAR rivals while improving its product lineup with added driving excitement and performance, say Chevy officials.

The commercial Chevrolet SS will share the award-winning global Zeta rear-wheel-drive architec-

ture of the Chevrolet Camaro and, in the Australian market, Holden’s upcoming VF Commodore.

“As a passionate race fan, the debut of the SS NASCAR race car is a genuinely exciting moment for me,” said GM North America President Mark Reuss.

“With the SS, Chevrolet is delivering a true rear-wheel-drive NASCAR race car that is very closely linked to the performance sedan that will be evaluated for sale, ensuring that our most loyal enthusiasts will have the opportunity to experience the same thrill every day on the open road that our race car driv-



2013 NASCAR Chevrolet SS

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Eighth Grader Takes Aim



Stephanie Lux, a student at Bloomfield Hills West Hills Middle School, checks out a machine gun at the robotics, engineering and technology show put on by TARDEC and Macomb College.

Story on page 2; photo by Jim Stickford

Owners Are Pleased; Volt Charges Forward

Chevrolet Volt owners collectively have driven more than 100 million all-electric miles since the vehicle went on sale two years ago this month, according to GM.

The average Volt owner travels more than 65 percent of the time in pure electric mode as the car was designed – only using the gasoline-powered generator for longer trips.

By charging regularly, Volt owners drive approximately 900 miles, or a month-and-a-half, between fill-ups. However, many Volt owners quickly exceed that average, based on an EPA-estimated 98 MPGe that puts electric-only range at 35 mpg city and 40 mpg on the highway.

Andrew Byrne from Los Angeles is one of these drivers.

“Since my daily driving is all electric, I only really need to buy gas for long road trips,” Byrne said.

“I drove over 1,900 miles on my last tank of gas.”

With each avoided trip to the gas station, Volt drivers continue to increase their return on investment. Based on EPA estimates and compared with the average new vehicle sold in the United States, Volt owners are saving about \$1,370 a year in fuel costs.

“The best sign of a great product is when your customers are the most satisfied in the industry,” said Cristi Landy, Chevrolet Volt marketing director.

“Volt owners have found the Volt is not only fun to drive, but provides technology and performance where consumers need it most.”

This is the second year in a row the Volt has topped the satisfaction survey of one of the leading consumer testing organizations in the United States.

“My commute is 55 miles

round trip, but with the Volt, I use 80 percent less gas and save over \$150 each month,” said Farris Khan from Southeastern Michigan.

“Plus, the Volt is really fun to drive because of its instant torque; driving anything else feels like yester-tech.”

For the typical driver, the average Volt savings equates to: 9 weeks of groceries at \$152 a week; 228 car washes at \$6 per car wash, or 137 movie tickets at \$10 per ticket.

The 5 million gallons of gas saved is equivalent to \$21 million in gasoline costs averted overall – based on \$4 per gallon of premium – or more than two super-tankers of gas.

For the first 38 miles, the Volt can drive gas- and tailpipe-emissions-free using a full charge of electricity stored in its 16.50-kWh lithium-ion battery.

GM App Allows Spark Drivers to Keep Eyes on the Road While Connected

by Jim Stickford

When people think of hi-tech start-up businesses, they tend to think of places like Silicon Valley in California.

The folks at Livio in Ferndale disagree with that notion and believe their Livio Connect automotive technology shows just what we can do in metro Detroit.

Jake Sigal, Livio Connect CEO, said the company got its start back in 2008, a time that wasn’t so good for the car industry.

“I know times were tough back then,” Sigal said, “but that was also a time when the manufacturers were adding apps to their vehicles. The OEMs became more focused on iPhone and Android apps running in their vehicles from their smartphones.”

This emphasis created opportunities for companies like Livio Connect, Sigal said. The firm originally started as a consumer electronics company. They made the first desktop radios that were designed for people who were using the Internet’s Pandora radio service.

“Pandora is an online music service,” Sigal said. “They have millions of listeners and we came up with a radio that played music from Pandora instead of peo-

ple listening to it on their iPods. We transitioned to software production in 2009.”

One of the new software applications the company created is called Livio Connect API, Sigal said.

This app takes apps that run on drivers’ smartphones and transfers the graphics information to a vehicle’s dashboard graphics display.

“The apps run on your phone but you can use the controls that are displayed on your dashboard screen to run the app,” Sigal said. “That way, you don’t have to touch your phone and you can keep your eyes on the road.”

“We are working with GM on this. They’ve purchased our software to go in their new Chevy Spark. We even sent two people to the L.A. Auto Show. Right now, we are very focused on producing content that can be used on a smartphone.”

The company has about 15 full-time employees, Sigal said, adding that their success is the result of the team’s efforts. When explaining how Livio Connect API works, he compared it to a person with a computer and 500 printers. Each printer has its own cable.

If someone had a rig like that,

they’d want something that would connect his computer to those 500 printers without having 500 cables.

That’s what Livio Connect API does with smartphones and advanced vehicle dashboard displays. Different OEMs use different technologies. Some use Wi-Fi, some use Blue Tooth and some use USB technology. With Livio Connect, it doesn’t matter if you have an iPhone or an Android and it doesn’t matter what type of tech – Wi-Fi, Blue Tooth or USB – your car uses.

“Right now, there is no standard language for all these technologies,” Sigal said. “We provide the means to connect these different technologies to a dashboard display, making the apps easier and safer to use.”

Livio Connect API wasn’t developed overnight, Sigal said. They learned that the OEMs wanted to use more tech in their cars and that there was business to be done if someone could create a standard protocol that everyone could use.

“We are a growing business,” Sigal said. “We have 15 full-time employees and we want to get to 20 by the end of the year. We are looking to hire the best of the best right here in Michigan.”



Newly-named Michigan Science Center will open with special hours.

Detroit 3 Aid in Re-opening Of State’s Science Center

Thanks to donations from companies like Chrysler, Ford and GM, the Michigan Science Center – formerly known as the Detroit Science Center – again will be open to the public, starting on Wednesday, Dec. 26.

Due to financial troubles, the Detroit Science Center closed its doors 16 months ago, then board members went on a successful fundraising drive to get the money to reopen.

The announcement that the now-Michigan Science Center would reopen was made in late

November.

Tom Stephens, chairman of the board of directors for the Michigan Science Center, said the center will be open with special hours until Jan. 30, 2013, when a new full schedule will begin.

“This is an exciting first step in the future of the Michigan Science Center,” Stephens said. “We look forward to opening our doors and providing families a unique feature exhibit in a dynamic location where they can

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