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It's All About the Trucks This Week!

GM Reveals '14 Sierra, Silverado in Pontiac

by Jim Stickford

GM kicked off the introduction of the GMC Sierra 1500 and Chevy Silverado 1500 with sound and fury, signifying the next generation in the company's full-sized pickup trucks.

The event literally began with a bang when a pyrotechnic explosion launched the introduction of the Silverado. Mark Reuss, president of GM North America, said GM's truck customers rely on their trucks to meet the day-to-day challenges of earning a living, running a business and taking care of their families.

"Chevrolet is committed to giv-

ing truck customers the most refined, best-engineered pickups in the market," Reuss said.

To that end, the 2014 Silverado 1500 will become part of Chevrolet's three-truck portfolio, with each particular truck designed to let customers pick the truck that meets their particular needs.

The 2014 Silverado joins the Silverado 2500 and 3500 HD pickups, which were new for the 2011 model year. Reuss said that Chevrolet is also developing an all-new Colorado midsize pickup meant to offer "truck capability in a space- and fuel-efficient package."

Jeff Luke, executive chief engi-



2014 GMC Sierra 1500

neer for full-size and mid-size trucks said the Silverado 1500 offers some new features that should serve customers well while offering good looks. The exterior design is more aerodynamic



2014 Chevrolet Silverado 1500

while looking good with a twin-port grille, full-width bumper and a dual power dome hood that "creates a strong presence, which is carried through in sculpted body sides and fender flares."

Luke said what's under the hood is also impressive. The Silverado 1500 will feature a family of three all-new EcoTec3 engines.

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Max Grabowsky, left, founder of Rapid Motor Vehicle Co., is shown here around 1950. His 1902 truck would pave the way for the GMC brand.

GMC Truck Looking Back On 110 Years of History

The all-new 2014 GMC Sierra full-size pickup will be the latest in a bloodline that stretches back over a century.

The first truck to wear a GMC badge debuted in 1912, while a predecessor from the Max Grabowsky's Rapid Motor Vehicle Co. was the first commercial truck operated in the City of Detroit 10 years earlier.

Here's a list of highlights by decade:

- 1900s: The first Rapid truck – little more than a seat, an engine cover and a frame – was delivered in 1902.

- 1910s: The GMC name takes its place on a truck grille for the first time in 1912 and the mix of trucks offered had either upright front ends or curved "French" fronts.

- 1920s: The year 1927 was a milestone for design features with more stylized fenders, headlights attached to the radiator, and the first chrome-plated radiator surround.

- 1930s: Streamlining in the '30s added sloped grilles, more paint color options and passenger cabs inspired by car design trends, which helped expand the truck market.

- 1940s: Following the war, GMCs of the late '40s featured fully integrated headlights, as well as wider, lower, and bolder grilles.

- 1950s: Cars again influenced truck design in the '50s, resulting in more safety, comfort and per-

formance. 1955 highlights were hooded headlights and panoramic glass.

- 1960s: The first GMC pickup with a full-width hood debuted in 1960. Other design cues included "jet pod" grilles at the front and a pinched-waist body crease on each side.

- 1970s: Padded materials replaced many metal interior surfaces in the '70s; heavy-duty models offered a dual rear axle for the first time; the Crew Cab debuted.

- 1980s: In 1987, the Sierra name became standard for all full-size pickups with the introduction of a new, more aerodynamic generation of GMC trucks.

- 1990s: The '90s brought the first rear-hinged three-door Extended Cab. In 1999, a new generation of truck introduced the first use of frame hydroforming.

- 2000s: The new millennium brought the "D" decade: The first Duramax diesel engine for Sierra HD added capability and the first Denali pickup set a luxury standard for trucks.

- 2012: The new 2014 Sierra debuts on Dec. 13.

GMC has manufactured trucks since 1902 and the brand is evolving to offer more fuel-efficient trucks and crossovers, including the Terrain small SUV and Acadia crossover.

GMC offers three full-size hybrid trucks with the Yukon, Yukon Denali SUVs and the Sierra pickup.

Ram 1500 is Motor Trend Truck of the Year

by Jennifer Knightstep

The competition was fierce, with three tough contenders, but in the end, *Motor Trend's* Golden Calipers went to the Ram 1500, honored as the 2013 Truck of the Year over the Ford F-150 and the Nissan NV 12-Passenger Van. The announcement was made on Dec. 6.

Closely scrutinized and thoroughly tested in six categories – Design Advancement, Engineering Excellence, Efficiency, Safety, Value, and Performance of Intended Function – the Ram 1500 was the unanimous choice, wowing all five judges.

"We had a small but solid field of contenders for *Motor Trend's* Truck of the Year," said Edward Loh, editor-in-chief of *Motor Trend*, and one of the judges.

"But in the end, the choice was clear: Ram 1500 not only withstood our rigorous testing, it impressed at every step along the way. Our judges were won over by the performance of Ram 1500's broad array of standard and optional equipment."

Motor Trend cited several reasons the Ram 1500 won the Truck of the Year. Perhaps most importantly to truck owners, the Ram 1500 offers a range of trim levels and options, some standard, some add-ons, that make the truck truly customizable to the individual owners' needs. The Ram 1500 can be configured to be anything from a basic work truck to a durable off-road vehicle, the judges said.

Buyers looking for power and performance, they said, can



The 2013 Ram 1500

choose the V8 engine with an automatic 6-speed transmission (post-launch, an 8-speed transmission will be available). Buyers who value fuel efficiency can choose the much-hyped Pentastar 3.6-liter V6, which offers 42 percent more horsepower and 13 percent more torque than its 3.7-liter V6 predecessor.

But, says *Motor Trend*, choosing fuel efficiency doesn't mean giving up comfort or handling either – the Ram 1500 boasts ultra-cushy air suspension, similar to that used on luxury cars. In fact, the judges were "blown away by the smooth, quiet driving experience of the V6," typically an entry-level truck used as a cheap fleet vehicle. No more.

As happily surprised as the judges were with the performance of the V6, they were even more impressed with the V8.

With 407 lb.-ft. of torque and 395 hp, the "Sport" trim level,

Ram officials say, is fast, powerful, ideal for towing; it also boasts an interior reminiscent of Dodge's SRT vehicles, with the same seats and a similar overall feel. Judges also noted the improved Chrysler UConnect system, with an 8.4 screen, voice texting, downloadable apps and upgrades, and the option to make the truck a WiFi hotspot.

Fred Diaz, president and CEO, Ram Truck Brand, said he's proud of the truck's accomplishment. "Motor Trend's Truck of the Year is an amazing honor, truly one of the most prestigious awards an automaker can achieve. It reaffirms the fact that Ram has the best truck on the road today. Bar none."

The last time a Ram truck was recognized as *Motor Trend* Truck of the Year was 2010; winners in 2011 and 2012 were the Chevy Silverado and Ford F-150, respectively.

Finalists Named for NAIAS Car/Truck of Year

A group of 49 automotive journalists from Canada and the United States has selected the Cadillac ATS, the Ford Fusion and the Honda Accord as finalists for the 2013 North American Car of the Year.

The Ford C-Max, Mazda CX-5 and Ram 1500 are the finalists for the Truck/Utility of the Year.

This year, to reflect the growing numbers of crossover vehicles in the North American market, jurors voted to change the name of North American Truck of the Year to North American Truck/Utility of the Year.

The six finalists were announced

last week at an Automotive Press Association luncheon in Detroit.

This is the 20th year of the awards, which are unique in the United States because, instead of being given by a single media outlet, they are awarded by a coalition of automotive journalists from the United States and Canada representing magazines, television, radio, newspapers and websites.

The awards are financed by the jurors' dues and the organization does not accept advertising or fees from automakers.

To be eligible, a vehicle must be all new or substantially changed.

After considering dozens of vehicles this year, the jurors finally narrowed the field to the 11 cars and 10 trucks on which they voted.

The jurors voted early in December, sending their ballots directly to Deloitte & Touche in Detroit.

Diane DeFrancis, a partner at Deloitte & Touche, provided envelopes with the names of the finalists – in alphabetical order – to Lindsay Brooke, a member of the awards' organizing committee, who made the announcement.

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Contact us at news@oaklandtechnews.com