



2013 Ram 1500

## Four Wheeler Magazine Calls Ram 1500 Pickup of the Year

by Irena Granaas

The 2013 Ram 1500 has been named *Four Wheeler* magazine's Pickup Truck of the Year, the latest honor for the truck which has already won multiple awards.

This is the 24th year for the competition, which this year pitted the 2013 Ram 1500 Outdoorsman Crew Cab 4x4 against the Toyota Tacoma TRD T/X Baja, in a five-day, 1,000-mile competition that tested these trucks under just about every conceivable condition. Each truck was graded on its:

- Trail performance
- Empirical data
- Highway performance
- Interior
- Exterior

The Ram 1500 powered its way to victory with a palette of cutting-edge technologies that put the vehicle over the top.

"Our judges appreciated that the Ram 1500 was able to handle the on- and off-road segments of our test with ease while supplying a smooth ride via the new and versatile air suspension," said *Four Wheeler* Editor John Cappa.

"The Ram 1500 is an all-around great truck for work or play and that's why it has earned the Four Wheeler Pickup Truck of the Year award."

Fred Diaz, president and CEO, Ram Truck Brand and Chrysler de Mexico, in a Chrysler news release, said, "Pickup Truck of the Year from *Four Wheeler Magazine* recognizes the engineering efforts put forth to mold the new 2013 Ram 1500 and we're honored to carry the title.

"A large percentage of our customers are outdoor enthusiasts, making this award very well-received in a fiercely competitive truck market."

According to Chrysler, engineers changed every area of the truck - from a newly designed frame to new engines and transmissions to an all-new interior. Nick Cappa, manager, Ram Product Communications, cited several key factors crucial to the truck's latest award, including its air suspension system, which has been available for some time on the Jeep Grand Cherokee but is new for 2013 on the Ram 1500; and the class-exclusive eight-speed transmission, which, teamed with the available 500 hp, naturally-aspirated Pentastar V6, delivers a best-in-class highway fuel economy rating of 25 mpg.

The air suspension system gave the Ram an edge in several areas, Cappa said. For example, on the highway the system "actually hunkers down 0.6 inches," giving the truck a better aerodynamic profile. And it has two settings to raise the truck off the ground either one or two inches for extra ground clearance while off-roading.

Judges at *Four Wheeler* magazine also scored the trucks' interiors in selecting their award winner. Cappa cited the Ram's premium wood trim, new center stack with an upgradable Uconnect access system, wifi hot spot capability and the new dashboard rotary e-shifter, which works by

wire; and a new seven-inch dashboard gauge cluster that is reconfigurable to about 300 different screen display settings.

"You can completely change to see what it is you want to look at. For instance, if you're hauling a 10,000-pound trailer up a hill, in the summer in Arizona with the air conditioner going full blast, you can keep an eye on the (transmission) temperature," Cappa explained.

The new Ram 1500 has already won multiple awards, including Truck of Texas honors and AOL Autos Truck of the Year.

The Ram 1500 already has been named 2013 North American Truck/Utility of the Year at the highly-anticipated awards event that took place Jan. 14 at the North American International Auto Show.

The trophy for 2013 North American Car of the Year will also be awarded. Forty-nine automotive journalists will vote to determine winners.

"The point is, the truck's done extremely well. People are recognizing it not only for not backing down on capability and power, but also for achieving a best-in-class fuel economy rating," Cappa stated.

Summed up Cappa, "Four Wheeler Pickup Truck of the Year, that was a big one because they generally push the trucks a little bit harder than most people do, but their readers really use their trucks . . . It really speaks to the durability and capability of the truck, so it was a proud win for us."

### Researchers from State Universities Combine Efforts

DETROIT (AP) - Researchers from the University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Wayne State University have been showing how their combined efforts have contributed to some of the technological advances on display at this week's Detroit auto show.

The schools and their researchers have contributed to improvements in safety, performance and fuel economy with more than \$300 million in auto-related research projects over a five-year period, officials with the state's University Research Corridor partnership said.

During a tour of the North American International Auto Show, Wayne State University engineering professor Jerry Ku said the gap between academic and industry research has narrowed in recent years.

"We are very, very aligned. Same direction," said Ku, whose research deals in part with electric vehicle battery packs.

Ku said vehicles such as the Nissan Leaf electric car, the Chevrolet Volt plug-in and Toyota's Prius hybrids also serve as inspiration when coming up with ways to teach about the latest industry advances. He said students are asked to look at how the technology for such vehicles is developed.

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