

Tech Center News™

WARREN, MICHIGAN - EST. 1976

VOL. 37 NO. 20

"Covers the Hub of Macomb County's Auto Industry"

JANUARY 21, 2013

'We Have a Very Big Year In Front of Us' – Ammann

by Irena Granaas

A slew of significantly refreshed and new products which have either already arrived or are in the pipeline, coupled with global industry growth in the U.S. and China have General Motors Co. financial prognosticators giving the year ahead a thumbs-up for continuing profit growth.

Dan Ammann, GM senior vice president and chief financial officer, and Chuck Stevens, chief financial officer, GM North America and CFO GM South America, shared the company's financial

outlook with investment analysts attending the 2013 Global Auto Industry Conference in Detroit.

"As you've heard from my colleagues here, we have a very big year in front of us," said Ammann. "It's the year of the car; it's the year of Corvette; it's the year of (Cadillac) ATS, the car of the year; it's the year of a lot of other components coming through in the Cadillac portfolio, the ELR that was unveiled today. It's going to be the year of the truck, obviously, with the Silverado and Sierra, and all around the

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2013 Cadillac ATS

2013 Cadillac ATS Named N.A. Car of Year

by Irena Granaas

The 2013 Cadillac ATS triumphed over 14 other vehicles from a global pack of automakers to bring home the North American Car of the Year award.

A panel of 49 automotive journalists gave top marks to the compact luxury sports sedan, scrutinizing every new car released in the past year, including entries from Chrysler LLC and Ford Motor Co., as well as Audi, Mercedes-Benz, Volvo and Infiniti.

Judges announced the award at a press conference opening the 25th annual North American International Auto Show in Detroit. On its corporate Web site, GM touts the ATS as the lightest and most agile Cadillac, featuring an all-new rear-wheel-drive, lightweight architecture and a curb weight of less than 3,400 pounds.

"This is a very meaningful honor for the entire Cadillac team, especially the men and women who build the ATS in Lansing, Michigan, and our dedicated and talented de-

signers and engineers," said Bob Ferguson, General Motors vice president for global Cadillac.

"A car like ATS is the result of incredible commitment and focus. That's the only method for creating a great-performing luxury car."

Previous awards include being named Car of the Year by Esquire and by the Motor Press Guild. It recently received a 5-Star overall crash test rating by the NHTSA New Car Assessment Program.

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GM CFO Dan Ammann at Detroit auto show

Chevrolet Introduces Five Outside-U.S. Models at Detroit Auto Show

Chevrolet, in an effort to show just how international the brand has become, showcased its global portfolio during the North American International Auto Show.

For the first time, the Onix, Spin, Trax, Sail and Orlando – five models developed and sold outside the United States – will be included.

Two all-new Chevrolets – the 2014 Silverado and the Corvette – also debuted at the show.

"NAIAS kicks off the global auto show season and gives us a unique opportunity to show off the depth of Chevrolet's global product lineup," said Mary Barra, senior vice president of Global Product Development.

"The appearance of these five global vehicles further reinforces Chevrolet's commitment to tailor vehicles to our customers' needs around the world."

Among the vehicles that were displayed on the second floor of Chevrolet's exhibit is the Trax. It is Chevrolet's entry into the growing small SUV segment and is designed to deliver flexibility, fuel economy and car-like handling for urban drivers.

Chevrolet spokespeople say it has a "muscular exterior design and the wide stance is complemented by interior details executed to standards usually found in more expensive vehicles."

The Trax has room for five passengers and class-leading cargo space. Mexico and Canada were the first markets to sell the crossover in the fourth quarter of 2012.

The Trax is based on GM's Gamma II platform, which is shared with the Opel Mokka and the Buick Encore. It had its world debut last year at the 2012 Paris Auto Show and slots below the

mid-size Chevrolet Equinox.

Auto show attendees also had the chance to see the Orlando. Chevy designed the Orlando to be part MPV, part crossover, and to break the rules of a historically conservative segment, offering an alternative to many family vans and crossovers on the market.

Orlando can transport up to seven people and is expected to deliver the best fuel efficiency of any non-hybrid seven-passenger vehicle.

The Orlando is produced by General Motors South Korea and was launched in Canada in October 2011. It is based on the GM Delta II platform, and is related to the Buick Verano and the Chevrolet Cruze.

There also was the Sail, which was developed in China. It is a small car designed for young Chinese families who want an affordable, spacious, durable and safe vehicle with good fuel economy. The Sail offers a choice of class-leading 1.2-liter S-TEC II and 1.4-liter S-TEC III engines.

The Sail is based on the GM4200 platform and is related to the Chevrolet Montana, the Opel Corsa and the Vauxhall Nova.

The Sail was the first passenger car created in China by a Sino-foreign joint venture. It was developed by Shanghai GM and the Pan Asia Technical Automotive Center.

In addition to being sold in China, the Sail is exported to emerging markets such as Chile, Peru and Bolivia. It is manufactured and shipped in kits for assembly in India, Colombia and Ecuador.

The Spin, which will be manufactured at GM's facility in Bekasi, Indonesia, also was at the show. It will go on sale in Thailand and Indonesia in 2013 and is a seven-passenger

MPV designed with a compact footprint for the congested confines of urban consumers.

The Spin used the GM Gamma II platform, and replaced the Meriva and is also related to the Montana.

The Onix, a small hatchback, debuted at the Sao Paulo Auto Show in October 2012, and also is based on the Gamma II platform. It made its Detroit debut at the NAIAS.

It offers five-speed manual or six-speed automatic transmissions and a choice of 1.0-liter and 1.4-liter engines, both equipped to run on 100 percent ethanol or a flex-fuel mixture of gasoline and ethanol.

It features Bluetooth capability along with the Chevrolet MyLink system – a segment first in Brazil – that allows the user to bring songs, photos, videos and mobile phone applications for display on



2013 Chevrolet Sail

a seven-inch color LCD screen.

The Onix is produced at Gravataí in Rio Grande do Sul and went on sale in Brazil in November last year.

That's not all Chevrolet is showing the world. In addition to the five global vehicles, Chevrolet introduced the 2014 Corvette and Silverado.

PPG Industries Celebrates 50th Anniversary Of Its Automotive Electrocoat Technology

The technology used to make a car is as vital as the tech that goes into a car.

That was the message PPG Industries circulated at the 2013 North American International Auto Show.

Cynthia Niekamp, PPG senior vice president, Automotive OEM Coatings, said the company is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first use of PPG electrocoat technology in an automotive plant.

In this case, the technology was used in the manufacture of the Ford Thunderbird at the automaker's Wixom facility.

PPG, which has offices in Troy,

has kept up with the times and new technology to improve the electrocoat process, making it more efficient in terms of production time and chemical sophistication.

Rick Zoulek, PPG vice president, Industrial Coatings, said the POWERCRON 9000 is the company's first electrocoat formula made without a tin catalyst. This means that manufacturers will need less paint and less electricity to more uniformly electrocoat parts, resulting in less wastewater being generated.

Tom Kerr, PPG vice president, Fiberglass, said that the company's

efforts to save OEMs money goes beyond coatings. He said their work in improving composite materials for vehicles has resulted in lighter parts, which translate into fuel saving, important with new federal CAFE standards coming into effect in the next few years.

"PPG combined proprietary chemistries for the surface coating of glass fibers and innovations in fiberglass composition to create fiberglass products that achieve optimal balances of mechanical and thermal property solutions," Kerr said.

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