

Cadillac ELR Aces Winter Testing in Michigan's Upper Peninsula

by Irena Granaas

The Cadillac ELR extended-range electric luxury coupe moved an important step closer to hitting dealer showrooms with the successful completion of winter weather chassis testing.

Fresh off its debut at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, the ELR was accompanied by a crack GM engineering team recently as the vehicle was put through its paces under winter weather conditions in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

With the Detroit Metro area experiencing another mild winter, General Motors engineers needed some place with extreme winter road conditions to challenge the ELR.

Kevin Kelly, GM manager of Electrification Technology Communications, noted the U.P. provides an ideal winter testing ground.

"We had about four inches of fresh powder the day we were up there, so weather conditions were perfect for us to put the car through the test for the winter conditions . . . (Weather is) pretty predictable there," he said.

"You're pretty much guaranteed that this time of year you'll have ideal conditions for doing testing like we were doing, whether that would be riding around on an icy surface to test ABS traction control or just to test the suspension system and the overall handling through some of the imperfections you would get in a winter environment."

According to engineers, the Cadillac ELR performed admirably during this final round of testing for the chassis under winter driving conditions. Both the chief engineer and executive chief engineer signed off on the final calibration for winter tuning and winter chassis performance.

"The car did exceptionally well

and we're proud of what the team has accomplished with the car . . . The chief engineer was up there as well as the exec chief engineer and they were really thrilled by what they had experienced," Kelly said.

With winter testing completed, the team is moving on to the next rounds of testing in various climate conditions as Cadillac gets the ELR ready for production.

Based on the Cadillac Converj Concept, the car has been honed by designers and engineers, say Cadillac officials, to remain faithful to the "striking exterior and interior looks, while providing the confident, smooth yet spirited performance handling Cadillac customers expect in a sports coupe."

According to Kelly, the ELR's range is expected to compare favorably with the Chevy Volt, which has a range of about 38 miles. The ELR, with larger wheels, tires, and a more specialized suspension system will have a range of about 35 miles on a single charge.

"We have some optional equipment in the car, a different suspension system called Continuous Damping Control that adjusts continuously to road conditions," Kelly explained.

"Other factors are the HiPer Strut performance-tuned front suspension system that also improves handling; and the watts

link suspension in the rear, another piece of the puzzle that helps us deliver a really confident handling package for the car (yet) it also helps us give a more spirited feel to the car.

"Those changes also added some weight to the vehicle, which caused some reduction in the range compared to the Volt. But we wanted this car to have some spirited performance – that was our paramount thing – to make the the car have some great character, ride and handling, so that's why we made the choices we did on the suspension."

While it is slated to hit dealer showrooms until early 2014, the Cadillac ELR has already brought home a trophy in winning the Eye-son Design Award for best production vehicle at the Detroit auto show.

"What probably impressed most of the observers was how close we were able to keep the car to the original concept, when we displayed the concept vehicle a few years ago," Kelly said.

"The fact we were able to do that was very, very pleasing to most people who were paying attention to the development of the car, and . . . in fact, the design team put the concept vehicle in the studio with them as they were going through the production car and they tried to match it as best they could be-



More than four inches of fresh snowfall during testing in Michigan's Upper Peninsula helped validate final specifications on pre-production versions of the ELR's ride and handling dynamics.

cause the concept car got such rave reviews.

"What we've managed to do here is provide the industry's first luxury extended-range coupe, and we've lived up to the promise of what Cadillac customers would expect," Kelly said.

"I mean, the sheet metal speaks for itself. It's an amazing design and we're very, very pleased by what the reaction has been at the auto show . . . The design is striking but still in keeping

with what you'd expect from a Cadillac, not just the exterior but the interior as well.

"We had a couple of journalists at the media preview days who asked us how much of the interior was going to be production, not realizing that the full car that they saw is going to be the car that is going into production."

"They were very pleased by the materials and the fit-and-finish of the car that they saw at the auto show floor."

2014 Ram 1500 to Offer EcoDiesel 3.0-Liter with 8-Speed Automatic

Beginning in the third quarter of 2013, Ram will become the only brand to offer a small-displacement diesel for its half-ton line of trucks, according to Chrysler officials.

The 2014 Ram 1500 will offer a new, 3.0-liter EcoDiesel engine, mated with the eight-speed TorqueFlite automatic transmission. Chrysler officials say they expect the powertrain to deliver a combination of best-in-class fuel efficiency and best-in-class torque, while still being capable.

"Truck owners have been emphatically asking for it, and Ram will be the only manufacturer to offer a diesel powertrain in the half-ton segment with the 2014 Ram 1500 EcoDiesel," said Fred Diaz, president and CEO – Ram Truck Brand and Chrysler de Mexico.

"The half-ton truck market is incredibly competitive, and although we're honored the Ram 1500 has received a number of prestigious awards, we cannot rest on what we have accomplished, we must keep pushing."

The 2013 Ram 1500 won *Motor Trend's* Truck of the Year, The North American Truck of the Year and Truck of Texas. Building

on the award-winning truck, the 2014 Ram 1500 EcoDiesel, say Chrysler officials, will further stretch its best-in-class fuel economy title lead and continue to raise the innovation bar in one of the automotive industry's most customer-loyal segments.

"The Ram 1500 with 3.0-liter V6 turbo EcoDiesel and TorqueFlite eight-speed transmission delivers on the demands of truckers by providing best-in-class torque, fuel economy and range," said Diaz.

"There's no doubt that being the only truck manufacturer to offer this game-changing technology will provide Ram with a competitive advantage."

The new 3.0-liter V6 EcoDiesel is an advanced diesel engine, say Chrysler officials, who add that its emissions are 60 percent less than those produced by diesel powertrains 25 years ago.

The combination of torque and fuel economy marks new and higher levels of performance for small V6 engines, Chrysler officials said.

Ram's newest turbo diesel engine is manufactured by VM Motori, a Chrysler Group diesel engine supplier since 1992.

Glynn Appointed Vice President of GM's North America Labor Relations

General Motors recently appointed Jim Glynn as GM North America Labor Relations vice president, effective immediately. He will be responsible for union-management partnerships, leading joint programs and negotiations, and other key matters involving union-represented employees.

Glynn most recently was GM North America Manufacturing manager, leading operations at 10 vehicle assembly, powertrain, metal stamping and battery assembly plants. During his 34-year GM career, Glynn held positions in manufacturing and manufacturing engineering, including an assignment leading operations in Mexico.

"Jim's extensive background in manufacturing and his reputation for building strong relationships with our union partners will help him succeed in this new role," said Tim Lee, GM vice president, Global Manufacturing, and president, GM International Operations.

"Our workforce is our competitive advantage and what we accomplish through collaboration



Jim Glynn

with our partners is critically important to the business."

Glynn succeeds Cathy Clegg, who was named Global Manufacturing Engineering vice president, replacing Eric Stevens who elected to retire after almost 35 years of service to GM.

In her new role, Clegg will have manufacturing engineering responsibilities for automotive press, body, paint, assembly, controls, powertrain and global program management.

Oakland U Names New Honors Dean

Oakland University's Graeme Harper is making the move from director of The Honors College to dean, following a recent announcement by the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Harper has served as director of the college since arriving at Oakland in August 2011. He holds doctorates from the Uni-

versity of East Anglia in the U.K. and Sydney, Australia's the University of Technology.

The Honors College was founded more than 35 years ago. The Board of Trustees recently announced that The Honors College will move from its present location in Vandenberg Hall to a new residence hall complex.

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