

Ford Opens Its Source Codes, Seeking Better Ideas for Apps

Ford Motor Company expanded its commitment to help encourage the growing community of automotive app developers by announcing it will contribute the software for AppLink, the Ford-developed in-car smartphone app interface, to the GENIVI Alliance.

Ford becomes the first American automaker to contribute proprietary source code from one of its products to an open-source project.

The AppLink software enables apps from connected smartphones to be controlled using the vehicle interface, including available voice recognition and audio buttons.

Along with the announcement of the industry-first open mobile app developer program at the 2013 International CES this past January, Ford announced the intention to take further steps to help developers be successful working with the automotive industry, an emerging growth area for app integration.

"Ford wants to see app developers succeed in their work with the auto industry," said Doug VanDagens, global director of Connected Services at Ford. "Contributing the AppLink software to GENIVI demonstrates our commitment to be developer-focused which supports our drive for consumer-focused innovation."

Learning from the lessons of the smartphone market, Ford stated that a vibrant app ecosystem is essential to the success of a platform for both users and developers.

Great apps will attract customers to the platform, which in turn draws more developers in order to expand the boundaries of functionality.



DRAGWAY RETROSPECT

by Dewey Ketner

Race Tracks Require Year-round Care

This is one of a series of columns to appear in the newspaper periodically. The author, Dewey Ketner, is a recognized expert on the subject of drag racing.

With the final NHRA drag race at Pomona, Calif., in November 2012 and the first of the 2013 season not until mid-February, drag racers, crews and owners can take those three months off for down time, rest and relaxation, right? Wrong!

There is a ton of work to be done before the first race of the season, a real laundry list of "gotta-dos," maybe a new frame or two, replenish the supply of complete engines, short block assemblies, cylinder heads, clutches, tires and hundreds of miscellaneous parts.

It's a restocking of all the goodies needed when on the road – their trucks could produce a complete car out of the contents. When you have only 75 minutes between runs to rebuild the engine and whatever else needs repair or replacement, you better be able to reach in that trailer and put your hand on the part needed. There is a place for every part and it better be there.

To complete the rebuild of a car, it has to be tested. The engine can be started and run on stands but the real test is getting this complex machine down the strip.

The crew of each drag machine is a group trained to do a specific job. They do their work with the touch of a doctor doing surgery.

This 2013 drag race season starts off with all the speed and excitement you can handle. During qualifications, the top 16 fuel dragsters averaged 318.375 un-

der four seconds. During eliminations, as expected, Tony Schumacher was one of the top cars to beat. He averaged 324.23 mph and 3.7 ET, only to lose to Shawn Langdon at 322.27 mph and 3.7 ET. But Shawn put a hole shot on him of .011 reaction time to Tony's .042. With only two runs where a car lost traction, every run was nose-to-nose with a difference in the lights of two to four feet.

However, there was a huge explosion on the car of Antron Brown at 308 mph at approximately the 800-foot mark, sending the car afire to the left lane, into the retaining wall, then across the strip to the right retaining wall, sliding down the wall.

Somewhere along this blazing mass, the engine and rear assembly came off. Watching the remaining section with the roll cage and front end slam the wall, you could only pray for the safety of Brown. Would you believe he walked away? That says a lot for the safe construction of the driver's cage. Ten minutes later, he was walking around and being interviewed. SAFETY FIRST ALWAYS!

Antron Brown was the top eliminator for the year 2012 and is the first African American to win top fuel. We'll see a lot more of him.

The Funny Cars were red-hot coming in at 300-plus mph and under 4.1 seconds. Again this class, like the fuel dragsters, were wheel-to-wheel 12 out of 15 races.

When you watch these Funny



Driver Antron Brown walked away from this crash, proving safety pays.

Cars, which run the same engine the fuel dragsters do, you know these drivers have their hands full. The shorter-wheelbase cars tend to "frog" out of position so fast, the drivers have to have a quick reaction to correct these wild stallions.

Courtney Force has a real good touch with her car, running 312.64 mph to 316.97 mph with ETs of 4.070 to 4.066, winning her class with a 317.12 mph 4.025 ET with a reaction time of .071. This kind of racing is what makes this sport so exciting – wheel-to-wheel at 300-plus mph. Almost photo finish results.

The other John Force daughter, Brittany Force, is in the top 20 of

the top fuel class with 31 points. Shawn Langdon is first with 116 and Tony Schumacher is second with 106 points.

Courtney Force is in first place in the Funny Car class with 124 points and Ron Capps is second with 94 points.

NEWS FLASH –

Onondaga Dragway, located between Jackson and Lansing may be opening this summer. One more trip through the planning commission at Onondaga Township should produce a permit to operate.

Plans are not yet completed but it will run a 1/8-mile as currently planned.

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Black Book Offers Monthly Valuations, Updated Pricing for Specialty Autos

The specialty car market has become popular over the past several years, making it more important than ever for owners of such vehicles to be able to determine their worth on the open market in a timely fashion.

Which makes *Black Book's* announcement that it will now offer regular monthly valuation and pricing updates for old cars and vehicles in the specialty markets important to collectors.

Vehicles covered in the company's valuation include collectibles, exotics, and highline cars, as well as motorcycles and power sports vehicles. *Black Book* is also offering valuations on recreational vehicles and medium- and heavy-duty trucks.

Black Book is the only publisher of old car and specialty market valuations each month for mobile, data source and internet suite products, helping remarketers, dealers and lenders make more accurate decisions.

While many of the specialty markets experience pricing changes that follow seasonal patterns, additional and unexpected outside factors can influence unforeseen pricing changes. For example, abnormal weather patterns

in late fall held snowmobile values from their normal seasonal uptick. *Black Book's* regular updates alerted dealers who were able to make adjustments for stocking and selling inventory.

"Infrequent updates on prices won't account for smaller valuation changes which, when added up, can provide a significant adverse impact to a dealer's profit margins," said Ricky Beggs, vice president and managing editor of *Black Book*. "The same way people now use technology to get news and information faster, our regular updates help industry constituents make better decisions whether they're buying, selling or lending."

Black Book collects extensive pricing data from auctions and wholesale events around the country in each of the specialty markets as well as older cars. *Black Book's* team of editors actively follows their respective markets, with information and insight that helps industry followers react more quickly to market changes.

Dealers are able to put their money on the line with more confidence, and lenders can be aggressive without being over-collateralized.

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