IAC Launches Smartfoil for Stingray Interior

International Automotive Components (IAC), whose North American headquarters are in Southfield, will supply many interior components – including the hand-crafted instrument panel and floor console – and will debut its innovative Smartfoil solution for the lower door panels on Chevrolet's most anticipated new vehicle, the 2014 Corvette Stingray, launching later this year.

IAC's Smartfoil TPO (thermoplastic olefin) is an exclusive material with a high-quality feel that adorns the interior lower door panels of the 2014 Stingray, providing improved craftsmanship and luxury, while reducing cost and weight compared to traditional solutions. Smartfoil's durable top coat reduces scratches that can be evident in vehicles with low entry/exit points like the Corvette.

"We are honored to be associated with a strong brand like Chevrolet," said Maurice Sessel, senior vice president of product engineering at IAC. "Having the opportunity to launch our newest technology, Smartfoil, on a hand-crafted, premium interior, such as the new Corvette, is an ideal application for this innovative solution. It also is a testament to market acceptance for this unique process."

Smartfoil is ideal for applications that require improved performance, durability and styling, while maintaining a luxurious look and feel, Sessel said. Its A-surface material has an excellent grain definition and a vacuum-form feel at a similar cost to soft-touch paint and represents up to 10 percent weight savings per component over traditional solutions.

The new material is eco-friendly and also provides excellent color and gloss control and a consistent finish. Designers are able to wrap the material after molding, without parting lines, for locations like the map pocket or other storage compartments. Smartfoil eliminates the traditional adhesive process, as the sheet is actually bonded to the resin during a one-step molding process, producing an appealing and durable finished component with in-mold grain, while reducing assembly time and cost.

Smartfoil works well for most other injection molded parts, including consoles and instrument panel components. Advanced material applications currently being considered at IAC include the use of Smartfoil with natural fiber compression molding and other proprietary hybrid molding techniques in the pipeline for future applications.

As GM seeks to attract the next generation of Corvette enthusiasts, the craftsmanship of the interior is increasingly important, IAD officials stated. To help meet additional consumer demands for luxury and improved styling, IAC also provides the hand-stitched instrument panel and floor console, pillar trim, garnish and floor mats to the new Corvette.

IAC will produce the various Corvette components in Dayton, Tenn. Pre-production and prototype components are currently being tested and IAC expects to begin full-scale production in July.

Shanghai Assembly of Cadillac XTS To Improve Sales Position in China

Cadillac has began production of the new XTS luxury sedan in China, the latest and most important milestone in the brand's growth in the world's largest auto market, GM officials said.

Shanghai joins Oshawa, Ontario, as an assembly location for the XTS, marking the brand's biggest step in its expansion since arriving in China in 2006.

"We are reaching the next level of Cadillac growth in China," said Bob Ferguson, vice president, Global Cadillac. "This expansion in localized assembly for our brand in China coincides with the strong momentum of our new product portfolio and significant growth in the dealer network."

Cadillac China's dealer network has grown to more than 150 locations, roughly doubling in the past year. It is planned to reach 250 outlets in the next two years. The brand sold 30,000 vehicles in China in 2012 with a goal of topping 100,000 annually by 2015.

The Cadillac XTS marks an important addition to China, redefining the large luxury sedan via advanced technology such as standard Magnetic Ride Control, the breakthrough CUE system for connectivity and control and advanced safety systems.

The elegant and spacious interior of the XTS is a good fit in China, where luxurious space is highly valued, Ferguson said.

$250 Million CAMI Upgrade Slated To Add Products

General Motors will invest $250 million in the CAMI Assembly Plant in Ingersoll, Ontario, to install flexible body shop equipment and tooling for future vehicle production.

"Conversion of the CAMI Assembly Plant to a flexible manufacturing facility will provide CAMI with the ability to produce multiple global architectures and body styles," said Kevin Williams, president and managing director, General Motors of Canada. "Continually improving the flexibility of our manufacturing operations helps us respond quickly to customer needs and market demand."

Manufacturing flexibility is a priority for General Motors, and this investment will give CAMI the ability to build a higher variety of differentiated products, on multiple platforms, at much lower costs.

"We have had a strong start to 2013 with customer demand for our newest vehicles driving improved sales," Williams said. "This is strong confirmation that our investing in manufacturing flexibility, finding ways to bring new products to market faster, is the right strategy."

CAMI currently manufactures the Chevrolet Equinox and the GMC Terrain crossover utility vehicles for General Motors.

Construction is expected to begin in the coming weeks.