

2014 Spark EV ‘Sets Industry Benchmark’ for Electric Vehicle Efficiency

GM’s green efforts look to be producing results. The automaker released the mileage figures for the 2014 Spark EV and declared that it sets “the industry benchmark in retail electric vehicle efficiency”

with a combined city/highway EPA-estimated range of 82 miles when fully charged and an EPA-estimated combined city/highway 119 MPG fuel economy equivalent. “Being able to provide our cus-

tomers with the best overall efficiency of any retail EV has always been a key target for the Spark EV engineering team,” said Pam Fletcher, GM executive chief engineer for Electrified Vehicles. “We’re poised to deliver to the

market an EV that’s not just efficient, but also thrilling to drive, thanks to the 400 lb.-ft. torque output of its electric motor.” Compared with the average new vehicle, the Spark EV can potentially save its owners up to

\$9,000 in fuel costs over five years. The Spark EV goes on sale this summer in California and Oregon. The Spark EV’s 21 kWh lithium-

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Chrysler-Sponsored Robotics Teams Head to Nationals

by Irena Granaas

Ten Michigan high school teams receiving grant support from Chrysler qualified to compete against rivals from around the nation in the 2013 FIRST Robotics Competition Championship held April 24-27 at Edward Jones Dome in St. Louis, Mo.

“The Chrysler Foundaton and Chrysler Group are proud to play a role in encouraging students to explore the worlds of science, technology, engineering and mathematics education,” said Jody Trapasso, senior VP, External Affairs, Chrysler. “We wish all of the teams the best of luck as they embark on this exciting and rewarding challenge.”

The Chrysler Foundation, Chrysler’s charitable arm, issued \$30,000 in additional grants to support the following teams:

- Andover and Lahser high schools, Bloomfield Hills – Bionic Barons;

- Bishop Foley Catholic High School, Madison Heights – Foley Freeze;
 - Goodrich High School, Goodrich – More Martians;
 - Grand Blanc High School, Grand Blanc – EngiNERDs;
 - Macomb Academy of Arts & Sciences, Armada – Fighting PI;
 - Notre Dame Preparatory School, Auburn Hills – Killer Bees;
 - OSMTech Academy at Clarkston High School, Clarkston – Team RUSH;
 - Oxford Community Schools, Oxford – TORC;
 - Pontiac High School, Pontiac – Wings of Fire;
 - Rochester Adams and Stoney Creek high schools, Rochester Hills – Adambots.
- The grants help offset the costs of registration fees, parts, materials and team apparel.

A Chrysler-sponsored Canadian team from Windsor, Ontario,



Notre Dame Prep’s Killer Bees are one of the Chrysler-sponsored teams qualifying for the national contest.

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Next 5 Years Should be Good for Industry – WWJ’s Gilbert

Jeff Gilbert, WWJ Radio 950 “AutoBeat” reporter who hosts “The Car Chronicles,” gave a fairly positive report card on the state of the American auto industry at “Automotive Update: 2020 Visioning,” held at Oakland Community College’s Auburn Hills Campus April 24.

Gilbert said a couple of years back, the U.S. auto industry was “in a mess,” plunging from selling 17 million vehicles per year to suddenly moving only about 10 million units.

“And really, that 17 million sales rate was what set us up for failure, because really, it was unsustainable,” he said. “Vehicles were being sold at a discount. There were incentives even on popular-selling vehicles, and the second people didn’t need a car, they stopped buying and the

market dried up.

“People were under water with vehicles, and we all know what happened to the automaker down the road in Auburn Hills and to GM in Detroit – they went through bankruptcy. But the good news is, they’re back, and in a great way.

“A lot of the heavy lifting with General Motors was done before the bankruptcy, a lot of it with Chrysler was after the bankruptcy, but either way both companies are doing great, Ford’s doing great.”

Gilbert noted that Ford had just posted that morning a first quarter profit of \$1.6 billion. All the analysts Gilbert said he has talked to say the upward trend for the North American auto industry should continue at least for the next year or so and then

stabilize at maybe 16 million vehicles sold per year.

He said in many ways that’s a “sweet spot” of sales that should be sustainable and where automakers are realizing a profit per each vehicle sold, and consumers have been loading up new vehicle purchases with options, driving the profit margins even further.

He quoted a GM source as saying pent-up demand for new vehicles is so strong it will take about five years for it to play out, which is also good news for automakers.

“Part of that is because the average vehicle on the road is over 11 years old,” Gilbert added, commenting that if someone bought a popular model car 11 years ago, it came with power-adjustable brakes, “keyless” entry –

thanks to a key fob button – a six-disc CD changer and two air bags. For the driver and front seat passenger, navigation, MP3 connection and heated seats did not exist.

In comparison, said Gilbert, the Chevy Spark, which is about the smallest American vehicle out there, offers a sophisticated

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AH Chamber Sets May 2 Roundtable

The Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce will host its first Economic Roundtable meeting Thursday, May 2, from 8 to 10 a.m. in the Auburn Hills Public Safety building meeting room, 1899 N. Squirrel Road.

The meeting will focus on providing information and updates on the city of Auburn Hills’ progress, current projects and prospects for future development. The roundtables will give citizens one-on-one access to city leadership.

Auburn Hills Economic Development Coordinator Laurie Renaud and Director of Community Development Steve Cohen are the featured speakers.

The free event is an opportunity for businesses to learn about the various aspects of community or economic development, or about the numerous development projects going on in the city.

For information or to register, contact the Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce online at www.auburnhillschamber.com.



Jeff Gilbert

American Carbon Registry Honors GM’s Commitment to Environment

General Motors’ demonstrated commitment to reducing its carbon footprint and mitigating climate impact is being recognized by the nonprofit American Carbon Registry.

“In addition to energy efficiency and waste reduction gains, GM announced the Chevrolet Carbon-Reduction Initiative – one of the largest voluntary commitments to greenhouse gas reductions in U.S. history,” said registry Director John Kadyszewski.

“The company is going beyond business as usual to spread awareness of the benefits of a reduced carbon footprint.”

American Carbon Registry awarded its Corporate Excellence Award to GM and recognized several of its environmental efforts, including reducing manufacturing emissions by 60 percent since 1990, recycling 90 percent of its manufacturing waste, reducing water and fossil fuel use and investing hundreds of millions of dollars to build fuel-efficient vehicles like the Chevrolet Volt.

“Our commitment to the environment is company-wide and broad in scope,” said GM Direc-

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Chevrolet Zone Manager Michael Stinson, right, accepts the American Carbon Registry’s Corporate Excellence Award from Nicholas Martin.

Contact us at news@oaklandtechnews.com