



The 1948 Ford F-Series truck



Sixty-five years later, the Ford Atlas concept

DPS Students See Science in Action At Chevy Grand Prix with ‘Fifth Gear’

Building on the momentum of last year’s well-received program, the Chevrolet Belle Isle Grand Prix and PNC Bank have announced plans for the 2013 Fifth Gear program.

The program, which focuses on helping to educate Detroit Public Schools (DPS) students through motorsports, combines a mathematics and science curriculum to generate excitement among DPS fifth graders for careers in the vitally important STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subject areas, through real-world applications in motorsports.

The program is funded by a grant from the PNC Bank Foundation under the stewardship of the Detroit Public Schools Foundation. Participating schools will incorporate the Fifth Gear curriculum into their classrooms over the next several weeks, while anticipating the return of the Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix May 31 to June 2.

“We launched the Fifth Gear program in 2012 with PNC Bank and DPS and we were proud that the Grand Prix was able to help them open the eyes of these students and show them all the opportunities and possibilities that exist in racing,” said Bud Denker, chairman of the Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix.

“It was so rewarding to see how the students embraced the math, science and technology of racing.

We are excited to continue to build on this program in 2013 and hopefully help create the next generation of racing engineers, technicians and mechanics from right here in the Motor City.”

Students will take what they learn in the classroom and see it come to life in a real racing environment at the Grand Prix.

They will work with motorsports organizations such as New Hudson-based Pratt & Miller Engineering, which designs, builds and manages campaigns for many of Chevrolet’s race teams, as well as representatives from Plymouth-based Ilmore Engineering, which partnered with Chevrolet on the de-

velopment of the current IndyCar engine, taking part in hands-on activities at the Grand Prix.

On Thursday, May 30, hundreds of participating students will visit the raceway at Belle Isle to take part in demonstrations designed around key concepts such as gravity, friction, aerodynamics and safety.

Another PNC Bank program, Grow Up Great, will also continue to participate in the racing education program through classroom instruction and activities at Belle Isle.

Grow Up Great is a multi-year, \$350 million initiative designed to improve early childhood education, especially in underserved areas. Through Grow Up Great, PNC emphasizes the importance of the first five years of life by helping families, educators and community partners provide ways to enhance learning and development in a child’s early years.

More than 500 DPS students are expected to attend the May 30 activities on Belle Isle, including more than 300 fifth graders from 14 schools through the Fifth Gear program and 220 students from 14 schools taking part in the Grow Up Great initiative.

Detroit Public Schools’ robotics teams will also be part of the activities during race week on Belle Isle, with participating teams from Cass Technical High School and East English Village Preparatory Academy bringing the robots they created to display, and also mentoring younger students.

“Through the Fifth Gear and Grow Up Great programs, our students are being exposed to learning outside of the classroom, allowing them to experience science, technology, engineering and mathematics concepts that go far beyond what they are reading in their school books,” said DPS Emergency Manager Roy S. Roberts.

“We thank PNC Bank, the Chevrolet Detroit Belle Isle Grand Prix and the Detroit Public Schools Foundation for making learning fun for our students and for helping to shape their future educational and career goals.”

Ford Marks 65 Years of F-Series Trucks

by Irena Granaas

The Ford F-Series truck, a perennial best-seller for the Dearborn-based U.S. automaker, is celebrating its 65th year on the market.

Members of the general public got their first view of the vehicle that would come to personify “Built Ford Tough” in years to come on Jan. 16, 1948. It was Ford’s first post-World War II new product and, as such, carried a lot of weight as a harbinger of the company’s competitive future.

Ron Hall, Ford truck communications, said the company did continue to sell trucks during the war, but they were existing models, and Ford did not release any new models until 1948.

And what a solid future was born that year. Global new vehicle registrations for F-Series totaled 785,630 trucks last year, putting it in the No. 3 spot among all vehicles sold worldwide, and, according to Ford’s data, the F-Series has been America’s best-selling pickup for 36 straight years.

Back, then, the sturdy, streamlined-looking 1948 F-1 pickup truck already showed the design DNA so widely recognizable in its 21st-century descendants today.

“The new trucks are attractively styled without losing ruggedness necessary for good performance and long life,” said a Ford press release on the F-Series pickup dated Jan. 16, 1948. “Radiator grille and headlights are recessed in a functional pattern in the modern front end, which contributes to massive appearance and gives added protection.”

Interestingly, according to Wikipedia, the F-Series was introduced in 1948 as a replacement for the previous car-based pickup line introduced in 1941. The F-Series was sold in eight different weight ratings, with pickup, panel truck, cab-over engine (COE),

conventional truck, and school bus chassis body styles.

The 1948 Ford news release touts, for the driver’s comfort, coach-type seats with cushions, ash tray, sun visor and three-way air control system.

Today’s F-Series trucks offer amenities such as air conditioning, satellite radio plus CD and MP3 device playback, satellite navigation, rear view backup cameras, leather upholstery, tastefully designed interiors, and a menu of high-powered, fuel-efficient engine and transmission choices to fit the needs of just about every truck customer out there. Then, as now, Ford emphasized things like horsepower, tire clearance, compression ratios and gross vehicle weights.

Back then, the all-new F-Series pickups had three available powertrain combinations: A 95 horsepower six-cylinder engine; a 100 horsepower V8; and a 145 hp V8.

According to Eric Peterson, Ford F-150 Marketing manager, when it comes to the F-Series truck, the key to its success has always been its ability to get the job done.

“It’s always been about capability, reliability and durability,” he said, citing the 95 hp engine option listed in 1948.

“That would be an ample amount of power . . . and then the progress over time (where Ford) continued to add horsepower, add torque to get into the hundreds, the 200s, the 300s to where we’re at today, it’s quite a model of progression . . . Everything the truck has been about up to where it is today is really all about providing someone with the ability to max out their performance, max out their ability to do work at some level,” said Peterson.

“It made (the truck) special when it was an F-1, to where it’s at today. It’ll give you the best, basi-

cally of what a pickup truck can offer to get the job done.”

The other aspect of the dawn of the F-Series that Peterson found interesting is the solid presence these have always had even when sitting parked.

“It is primarily about capability but what sets the vehicles apart is the presence they have and the design,” he explained. “Even as pickup trucks have some level of commonality to them, there’s a certain element of design and style that’s been present throughout the years with the F-150 . . . Not only is it capable, but it has to have a presence that conveys capability.”

What buyers look for, he said, is not only the ability to, say, tow more than anybody else, they also want to have maximum payload, and they have to have that sense the truck can do it, that it communicates that and gives the driver confidence.

Peterson conceded that the F-Series trucks’ appearance was even more important back in the days when information was harder to come by, but said it still matters today.

“Exterior appearance is so very important,” he said. . . . the truck had to convey a sense of capability, but ultimately, if it wasn’t durable and reliable, that would have played itself out, so it was a good way to get started.

“F-150s all had that look, and we just launched a concept truck, the Atlas, and it’s got this presence that conveys capability even though no one’s been able to drive one,” he said. “Yet, you’d be hard-pressed to find anybody who would think that truck isn’t capable, and it’s the look and the stance and the grille and the proportions of the vehicle, and it’s also backed up by the ‘Built Ford Tough’ shield. . . . it’s an earned reputation, but it’s also something the design characteristics clearly convey.”



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