

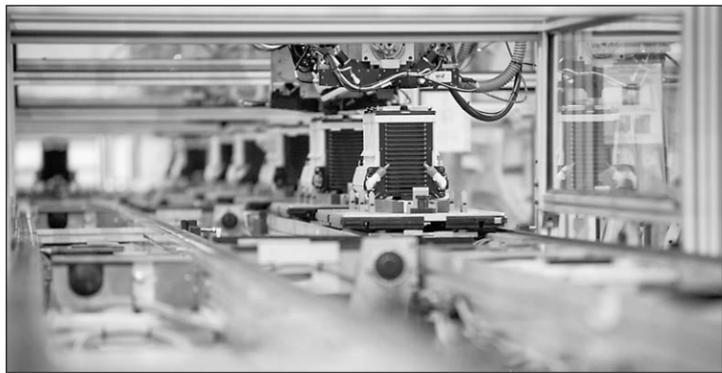
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Ultrasonic welding uses specialized tools that eliminate adhesives.

ELR's Ultrasonic Welding Produces Better Batteries

Ultrasonic welding, a high-tech manufacturing process used in the aerospace and medical industries, is helping ensure high quality for the new Cadillac ELR extended-range electric luxury coupe that goes on sale in North America in early 2014.

Ultrasonic welding's key advantage is exceptional and predictable quality and performance from one battery pack to the next, said David Darovitz, GM Manufacturing manager. Every ELR battery, for example, has close to 200 ultrasonic welds. Each is required to meet stringent quality requirements, enabling Cadillac to offer an eight-year/100,000-mile battery system

warranty.

Short cycle times, low capital costs and manufacturing flexibility through the use of automation are other advantages of ultrasonic welding, Darovitz said.

"Ultrasonic welding is a far superior joining technology in applications where it can be deployed," said Jay Baron, president and CEO of the Center for Automotive Research in Ann Arbor. "Cadillac's innovative process will produce batteries with superior quality compared with traditional methods – and do it more efficiently. This is one example of technology develop-

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Ram Black Express Pickup Termed 'Menacing,' 'Sinister'

by Irena Granaas

Whether someone is in the market for their first truck or just appreciates a sporty, fun-to-drive pickup with a lot of attitude, Chrysler believes it has the vehicle to fit the bill in the 2013 Ram Black Express.

Distinguished by its all-black exterior, black grille, black Ram's head badges on the grille and tailgate, and black front fascia with fog lamps, the new Black Express conveys a menacing presence when the driver ahead of the truck peers into the rear-view mirror.

"Ram trucks are known for their bold, in-your-face presence," said Reid Bigland, president and CEO – Ram Truck Brand. "The new Black Express takes Ram's aggressive good looks to an all new sinister level by 'blackening out' the entire truck while maintaining a great price."

The Black Express starts at \$26,955 plus \$1,095 destination charge, and includes the 5.7-liter Hemi engine that produces 395 horsepower and 410 lb.-ft. of torque, along with other content that expresses the truck's high-performance, and sports truck character. The legendary Hemi pow-

erplant comes with Chrysler's Fuel Saver Technology with cylinder deactivation, which enables fuel economy of up to 20 mpg in highway driving.

Ram spokesman Nick Cappa said the Black Express generates a lot of excitement and has broad appeal. While pointing out the automaker sees especially strong interest in the truck on the West Coast, Cappa said demand for this package is pretty strong everywhere.

The Black Express has already reached dealer showrooms and Cappa said demand is "extremely strong" for the truck package. He noted that the Black Express is the latest refinement in creating a truck appealing to multiple segments of the vehicle consumer market.

"The Black Express is a truck that definitely gets noticed going down the road," he said. "Especially from the front, it says very much with the bi-functional halogen projectors and the blacked-out grille. It has a very sinister look."

"You'd recognize it in your rear-view mirror."

Cappa said the truck can have strong appeal for someone looking for their first truck or their first vehicle.

"It is a value package," he said.



2013 Ram Black Express

"The fact that it comes standard with a Hemi and 20-inch wheels and a great grouping of features right at the bat for under \$30,000, you've hit a piece of the market where someone's looking for an entry-level vehicle that looks good right out of the lot. You don't have to modify it."

"The Black Express is an incredibly good-looking truck."

Cappa said the idea for the truck started a while back with the Ram Tradesman. The idea was to create a truck for somebody who had a vocational job and could use that as their work truck.

But over time, Chrysler would hear from customers who said when they went to resell their truck, after they'd used it for a certain period of time, trucks with a V6 engine offered a lower return on their investment, but owners were able to get more money for similarly equipped trucks with a V8. Thus was born

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Big 3 Adds to Investing as Sales Continue to Set Records

GM to Add \$167M for Two New Projects For Tennessee Mid-Size Vehicle Build

General Motors increased to \$350 million its planned spending for new vehicles to be produced at its Spring Hill, Tenn., assembly plant.

The new investment adds \$167 million to a previously announced \$183 million pledge and is expected to create or retain about 1,800 jobs, said Bill Grotz, manager of manufacturing and labor communications for GM.

The new investment is for two projects:

- An additional \$40 million added to the earlier announced \$183 million investment to support a future mid-size vehicle program, bringing the new total investment to \$223 million. This program is expected to create or retain approximately 1,000 jobs;
- A second mid-size vehicle

program with an investment of \$127 million that will create or retain approximately 800 jobs.

Timing and product specifications for both programs will be shared closer to the start of production.

Grotz said the new programs will add to existing manufacturing operations at the site that include vehicle assembly, stamping, engine and component parts production.

"Today's announcement recognizes the commitment of Spring Hill employees and leadership," said Mark Reuss, president, GM North America.

"As a team, they draw upon the plant's unique heritage and dedicated workforce to deliver

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Growing Sales Of F-150 Pickups Drive Ford to Add 900 Employees

Ford is adding a third crew of 900 new hourly employees at its Kansas City Assembly Plant to meet "surging customer demand" for the Ford F-150, said Mike Levine, Ford Truck Communications manager.

Ford F-150 is part of the Ford F-Series lineup, the nation's best-selling vehicle for 31 years and the best-selling truck for 36 years.

"Ford F-Series sales are the strongest since 2006, and we are increasing production to meet this demand," said Doug Scott, Ford Truck Group Marketing manager. "This is an important indicator that our economy is growing again. We are proud that Ford trucks are helping more and more of our customers get back to work."

The additional production crew is Ford's first step in bringing more than 2,000 jobs to the Kansas City Assembly Plant to meet growing truck demand and to launch production of the all-new Ford Transit van early next year, Levine said.

Over the past year, Ford has announced it will increase capacity by 600,000 units in North America to meet surging demand for its cars, trucks and utilities.

Levine said customer demand for Ford F-Series continues to strengthen and noted:

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To Increase Tigershark Engine Output, Chrysler Will Invest \$52M in Michigan

Chrysler plans to invest \$52 million in its engine plants in Trenton and Dundee to increase capacity of the Tigershark engine, creating nearly 298 new positions at the Trenton plant.

"With the growing demand for our products, we are constantly evaluating how to best meet powertrain production requirements," said Brian Harlow, vice president and head of Powertrain Manufacturing.

"In this case, we are fortunate that we had an existing facility that could accommodate the additional capacity needs for Tigershark and one that has the know-how to support that additional production."

Trenton North will receive \$11.5 million to add an assembly

line for the four-cylinder Tigershark engine, Harlow said. With a \$40.5 million investment, Dundee will convert a line to machine cranks, heads and blocks to support Tigershark production at Trenton.

The Dundee Engine Plant will continue to assemble the Tigershark engine, alongside the 1.4-liter FIRE engine and the World Gas Engine.

The new Trenton Tigershark line and the Dundee line conversions are expected to begin production by the end of the third quarter, Harlow said.

"The UAW is pleased that Chrysler Group continues to invest in its facilities and add good

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GM is expected to create or retain about 1,800 jobs at Tennessee plant.



Chrysler is creating 298 new positions at its Trenton Engine Plant.

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