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Concept Ram 1500 a Honey of a Truck

by Jim Stickford

Ten years ago, the Ram Truck Brand introduced the Rumble Bee, a popular model inspired by the Super Bee muscle car of the late '60s.

Ram last week unveiled a new HEMI-powered Ram 1500 Rumble Bee concept to celebrate the 10-year anniversary and the heritage of Ram's unique truck designs that include the Lil Red Express, Warlock and Power Wagon at the 2013 Woodward Dream Cruise.

"The Ram 1500 Rumble Bee continues to have a strong fan base and what better place to celebrate its 10-year anniversary than Woodward Dream Cruise,"

said Reid Bigland, president and CEO – Ram Truck Brand.

"There's a lot of energy surrounding concept trucks and buzz models, and the Ram Design Team revels in creating something that is unique for our customers to enjoy."

The Rumble Bee concept began life as a 2013 Ram 1500 R/T. Keeping with tradition, the lightweight, two-door, 2WD configuration is covered in "Drone Yellow" paint with a unique matte finish, said Nick Cappa, Ram brand spokesman. The rare color/finish flows over the entire truck including the bumpers, flares and the Mopar ground effects kit.

True to form, a new "Speed Bee" design is swathed on both

sides of the truck within a gloss black stripe that fades into honeycomb.

The stripe glides front to rear, around the top of the bed and over the Mopar tonneau cover to memorialize HEMI-powered vehicles of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which dominated the racing scene.

Factory 22-inch wheels are replaced with gloss black, 24-inch, Vellano VRH custom rollers and a 2-inch drop provided by King Suspension enhances handling performance and appearance with the help of a reservoir shock at each wheel, Cappa said. The grille, hood vents, badging, fuel door and the dual exhaust tailpipes are coated in gloss



The Ram Rumble Bee concept truck

black, carrying the theme on all sides.

The colors and graphics spread through the Ram R/T-based interior, featuring black

and Drone Yellow leather sport mesh seats with two-tone yellow/light-grey stitching. "Rumble

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



Steve Kiefer

Steve Kiefer to Lead GM's Global Powertrain Operations

Steve Kiefer will join GM effective Sept. 1 to lead its Global Powertrain Operations.

Kiefer, 50, has served in a variety of engineering and leadership roles over his career at both GM and Delphi and brings extensive engine development expertise and knowledge of the global auto business, said spokesperson Renee Rashid-Merem.

Kiefer has served as a company senior vice president and president of Delphi's Powertrain Systems since 2011.

"As GM continues to bring new vehicle engine and drivetrain technologies and innovations to the marketplace, Steve's customer perspective, technical expertise and proven leadership will further bolster our global powertrain team," said Mary Barra, executive vice president, Global Product Development & Global Purchasing and Supply Chain.

Kiefer will have overall responsibility for GM's global powertrain engineering activities, reporting to Mary Barra. Jim Lan-

zon, vice president, Powertrain Global Transmissions, will continue to lead the company's transmission development and engineering activities, reporting to Kiefer, Rashid-Merem said.

His company biography stated that Kiefer served as vice president of Delphi Thermal Engineering from 2009 to 2011; vice president and managing director of Delphi European Operations in Luxembourg from 2005 to 2008; and business line executive of Delphi Engine Management Sys-

tems from 2001 to 2004.

Prior roles include senior project engineer at GM's Milford Proving Grounds, assistant staff engineer at Delphi's Powertrain division in Luxembourg, and chief engineer for Asia Pacific. Kiefer began his career in 1983 as a college cooperative student with GM North American Car Group and spent several years in engineering roles with GM Powertrain.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Associate professor Vladimir Mulukha, of St. Petersburg Polytechnic University in Russia, shakes hands with "Justin," a robot used by Ford.

Space Communications Help Ford's Telematics Systems

Ford isn't sending a man into space – it's using robots that are already there.

The Dearborn automaker is utilizing robots sent into the vast reaches of the universe by the Russian space industry to study communications.

Specifically, Ford is researching communications between space robots and Earth to enhance future applications of the connected car communications protocol.

Craig Daitch, Ford's Smart Communications manager, said the research furthers the company's commitment to industry leadership in the development of connected vehicle communications. The research is intended

to help reduce traffic congestion and aid in the advancement of emergency vehicle communications methods.

Just one way Ford is making good on this commitment is through the launch of a three-year research partnership with the telematics department of St. Petersburg Polytechnic University in Russia in its association with that country's space industry.

The goal of Ford's relationship with the university is to analyze space-based robotic communications systems for vehicle mesh networks to aid in mobility solutions.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Protecting the Warfighter with New Systems Is Goal of Defense Technology Symposiums

by Jim Stickford

Times are tough for the military, but the demand for quality vehicles to protect the troops hasn't changed.

That's what makes events like the Ground Vehicle Engineering & Technology Symposium held in Troy last week have more value than ever.

Bruce Huffman, Public Affairs officer for the Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC) at the Army's TACOM facility in Warren, said events such as the symposium are important.

"This event is for government ground vehicle experts," Huffman said. "It offers them the chance to collaborate with their private sector counterparts and help plan for the future."

Dr. Paul Rogers, TARDEC's director, who spoke at the symposium, elaborated on the importance of interaction between the government and the private sector.

"Our goal at the end of the day is to produce a strategy that changes the way our warfighters fight and change what they experience," Rogers said.

The problem is that the warfighter of today experiences combat much the same way his father and his grandfather did, Rogers said. TARDEC's goal is to develop a strategy and share it with the private sector that looks 30 years into the future.

"Of course, things change and we have to change with them," Rogers said.

But TARDEC has spent the last 12 years supporting the coun-

try's war efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq, which is only natural, Rogers said. But it's now time to look forward and develop systems that the soldier of tomorrow can use.

"The ultimate goal is to develop systems of such fundamental superiority that the enemy knows they've lost the battle before it's even begun," Rogers said.

Developing these systems begins with TARDEC coming up with specifications and sharing those specs with private contractors, Huffman said. These contractors can then put their engineers to work developing systems to meet these specs, with the goal of creating newer and better systems that help keep the peace.

A prime example of this, Huffman said, is the Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) project.

The APU was developed by Marvin Land Systems (MLS) at General Dynamics Land Systems' Maneuver Collaboration Center (MC2) in Sterling Heights.

The center is designed to bring They can work closely with government people at the nearby TARDEC and TACOM facilities to develop systems to government specifications.

In this case, the government needed an APU to help the Army's Abrams tanks save fuel, Huffman said.

Many of the tanks' electronics systems, such as the radio, need power, which the current tank generates by idling – meaning the tank can be burning fuel while standing still.

Huffman said that has resulted



Paul Rogers

in tanks being relatively low on fuel when going into battle. He is aware of incidents in Afghanistan where tanks have had to leave the field of battle to go to the rear to get more fuel.

By developing an APU separate from the regular engine system, electronic systems can remain powered up while the tank isn't moving and the main engine doesn't have to be idling.

This can save a brigade of tanks the equivalent of two tankers of fuel in one day.

The MLS APU works similar to the Chevy Volt's gas engine. When the Volt's battery charge is down, the gas engine kicks in, but it doesn't power the car's drive system, it generates electricity that is used to power the Volt. The MLS APU burns diesel fuel to generate electricity to power the tanks' electronic systems, Huffman said.

This new system can reduce

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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