Oakland Tech News™

AUBURN HILLS AND ENVIRONS

VOL. 31 NO. 37 | *News of the Automotive, Technology and Supplier Community* | SEPTEMBER 23, 2013

2014 Ram 1500 Pickup

Ram Truck Brand Continues To Target Its Buyers' Needs

Since its launch as a standalone division of Chrysler Group in 2009, the Ram Truck brand has experienced steady sales increases.

"Ram trucks have achieved more than three years of consecutive year-over-year sales gains," said Reid Bigland, president and CEO – Ram Truck Brand, Chrysler Group. "We're seeing everything from premium, luxury trucks to value-priced models doing very well."

But it was even further back – 20 years ago, with the launch of the all-new 1994 Ram 1500 – that the design and technology pioneer was born. In 1994, Ram turned truck design upside down with radical-for-its-time, big-rig styling, Bigland said.

Two decades later, Ram Truck is reinforcing its technology and innovation with the introduction of the industry's only diesel-powered half-ton pickup. The brand continues to invest substantially in its products, infusing them with great looks, refined interiors, durable engines and features that further enhance their capabilities, Bigland said.

He added that Ram Truck has also grown sales and increased market share by developing and launching new pickup models targeted to specific buyer needs and wants, including: Tradesman, Outdoorsman, Express,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Auburn Hills Recognized by Michigan and U.S. for EV Fuel Technology Preparation

First, Auburn Hills.

Now, Michigan.

Soon, the nation?

Auburn Hills is moving up in the pecking order for cities with outstanding programs and practices in preparing for alternative fuel vehicle technology.

The city recently received the 2013 Planning Excellence Best Practices award from the Michigan Association of Planning (MAP) for the city's EV Ready Project.

As part of the Auburn Hills program, the city last year collaborated with the Michigan Department of Transportation to develop the Michigan sign standard for reserving parking spaces for electric vehicle charging stations.

Also last year, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) suggested the Auburn Hills EV charging station sign may become the national standard.

The MAP will be formally presented at the annual MAP/APA Michigan conference, "Planning Michigan," on Oct. 2 in Kalamazoo.

The Planning Excellence Best Practices award is presented to a specific planning tool, practice, program, project or process that emphasizes results and demonstrates how innovative and forward thinking planning methods and practices help to create communities of lasting value, said Stephanie Carroll, the city's director of Community Relations.

In particular, MAP recognized Auburn Hills for its comprehensiveness, leadership and innovation in preparing communities for alternative fuel vehicle technology.

Inception of the Auburn Hills EV Ready Project began in April 2011 when city officials decided to prepare for the fueling needs of plug-in electric vehicle drivers and make Auburn Hills an EV friendly city, Carroll said.

The effort was led by the Auburn Hills Planning Commission; Steve Cohen, Auburn Hills' director of Community Development, and Ron Melchert, Auburn

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Auburn Hills firefighter Brent Waldrep and his son Jack charge a Volt.

Rendering of the benefits of Impala's adaptive cruise control

Bumper-to-Bumper? This Car Brakes, Accelerates for You

How'd you like a driver for you in stop-and-go traffic?

Some folks say that's how GM's full-speed-range adaptive cruise control, available on the 2014 Chevrolet Impala, feels for them.

All drivers have to do, say GM officials, is set the control on a following gap that they choose. If the car starts to close that gap, the brake is automatically applied.

In a public statement, GM said the control can help reduce the number of repeated stops and starts during every day commuting, which can be stressful for drivers.

General Motors and the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute conducted a large field test in 2005 in cooperation with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, using Adaptive Cruise Control at speeds above 25 mph.

"Results indicated that brake-apply rates were 25 times lower under freeway conditions relative to manual driving," said James Sayers, a research scientist in the institute's human factors group. "These results suggest that Adaptive Cruise Control can substantially reduce the workload and stress associated with the everyday task of car following."

The redesigned flagship sedan is the first Chevrolet to offer this technology, which addresses the repetitive task of braking and accelerating via a cruise control system that allows the driver to maintain a driver-selected following gap with the vehicle ahead, said GM spokesman Chad Lyons.

Unlike regular cruise control, the full-speed-range adaptive cruise control system uses forward-looking radar to let the driver choose one of three gaps at which to follow the car ahead, Lyons said. These gaps adapt to the cruise speed selected, so a larger distance between cars at a higher cruise speed is provided.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

GM Adds 50,000 Square Feet to Its Global Battery Lab to Add Speed, Improve Value

General Motors has nearly tripled the size of its Global Battery Systems Laboratory, cementing the lab's stature as the largest battery lab in North America owned and operated by a major auto manufacturer.

"In the past four years, the competitive landscape in the electrification space has grown exponentially. This has required us to raise our game and draw a new line in the sand," said Doug Parks, GM vice president, Global Product Programs.

"To maintain our battery leadership, this additional real estate is filled with new capability that will help us improve speed to market for our next generation of battery systems and help us improve the value equation to our customers around the world."

The latest addition of 50,000 square feet brings to 85,000 the total square footage of the lab. The expansion made possible the increase in the number of pack-level test channels from 64 to 112 and cell-level test channels from 96 to120, Parks said.

GM spokesman Kevin Kelly said the battery lab opened in 2009 at the Tech Center campus in Warren.

"This is our third and final expansion of the battery facility," Kelly said. "We didn't add more office space, we put in lab space. The battery facility is where the old Chevrolet performance center was. They used to put engines up on dynamometers to test them. Now they've come full circle, so to speak. They are now testing batteries 24 hours a day to see how long they last."

GM's Global Battery Systems Lab has been responsible for testing and validating both battery cells and packs for all of GM's vehicle electrification systems, including the battery systems for the Chevrolet Volt, Cadillac ELR, Chevrolet Spark EV and GM's eAssist light electrification system, Kelly said.

The additional capabilities of the lab expansion include:

- Dedicated equipment for future vehicle battery system development such as charger development and testing, cord set testing and competitive benchmarking;
- Building prototype battery packs for vehicle development programs;
- The ability to act as the hub for validation and testing of all battery systems designed for use in future GM vehicles globally.

The lab will also play a critical role in assuring GM's current generation of electric vehicles maintain their battery leadership position, Kelly said. Teams will validate and test updates to existing chemistries and system designs to make the most of performance and reduce cost. For example, updates were made to the battery system in the 2013 Chevrolet Volt that added three miles of EV range, Park said.

"GM is committed to vehicle electrification," said Larry Nitz, GM's executive director of Global Electrification Engineering, "and our products in this area must continue to excite customers.

"A critical part of this plan is to deliver safe, reliable and affordable energy storage systems. The new capabilities of this lab will enhance our engineers' ability to design, develop, process and validate class-leading products to meet the needs of our growing customer base."

In addition to the lab in Michigan, GM also operates battery labs in Shanghai, China, and Mainz-Kastel, Germany, which are tasked with testing and validation of battery cells, packs, and advanced battery system development.

Newly updated GM Battery Systems Lab at Warren Tech Center