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Ed Rinke Chevrolet Sells First of Stingray Coupes

by Jim Stickford

The wait is over. Sports car fans no longer have to count the days before the 2014 Stingrays arrive at local dealerships.

Chevrolet began shipping the new 2014 Corvette Stingray Coupes to dealers on Sept. 18.

"It's an amazing sight to see the transporters filled with Stingrays heading to customers in all corners of the country," said Dave Tatman, plant manager of GM's Bowling Green Assembly plant.

"The pride at Bowling Green is overwhelming and it shows in the tremendous quality and attention to detail going into each one of these new Corvettes."

Bowling Green Assembly has produced approximately 1,000 Corvette Stingrays for customer deliveries. Most of these vehicles are expected to be delivered to dealers within the next few weeks, said Chevrolet spokesman Monte Doran.

To expedite delivery, vehicles may be shipped out of build sequence, which is a normal part of any new vehicle launch.

The Bowling Green facility underwent a \$131 million upgrade to support production of the Corvette Stingray, including approximately \$52 million for a new body shop to manufacture the car's all-new aluminum frame in-house for the first time, Doran said.

Ed Rinke Chevrolet Buick GMC in Center Line received its first 2014 Stingrays on Sept. 20, just

two days after the first ones were shipped from the factory.

Sales Manager Art Kurgin said the dealership received two – one went straight to a customer.

"The interest in the 2014 Stingrays is huge," Kurgin said. "There's a lot of demand for this car. We sold our first one a couple of months ago. Chevrolet didn't open up the orders for quite a while."

Kurgin said that because they were able to get only one Stingray that they were allowed to sell in the first orders, there is still a waiting list of prospective customers. He doesn't know how long it will take for the dealership to get enough Stingrays to eliminate the list.

"We haven't received any sense of the production of the vehicles," Kurgin said. "But we've gotten a lot of interest from the public about them. The Stingray is an exciting car that people want to buy."

According to GM specs, the lightweight aluminum frame is the foundation for the most powerful standard Corvette ever, with an SAE-certified 455 horsepower and 460 lb.-ft. of torque – and 460 hp and 465 lb.-ft. with the available performance exhaust system.

It is also the most capable standard Corvette ever, with Z51-equipped models able to sprint from 0 to 60 in 3.8 seconds, run the quarter-mile in 12 seconds at 119 mph, achieve 1.03 G-force in cornering grip and stop from 60 mph in 107 feet, Doran said.



Factory-fresh, the first 2014 Stingrays began arriving at dealerships nationwide last week.

Complementing its performance capability with efficiency, said Doran, the Corvette Stingray delivers the best fuel economy of any sports car on the market – an EPA-estimated 17 mpg in city driving and 29 mpg on the highway. No other car, he said, offers more than 455 horsepower and greater than 29 mpg on the highway.

The 2014 Corvette Stingray is the seventh generation of the sports car, which has been built exclusively at the Bowling Green plant since June 1981.

Pricing for the 2014 Corvette Stingray Coupe starts at \$51,995 including destination.

The convertible is priced at \$56,995, including destination. Production of the Stingray Convertible will begin by the end of this year.



Tim Koczara of Grosse Pointe Woods, left, purchased Ed Rinke Chevrolet's first 2014 Corvette Stingray Coupe from salesman Mark Sly.



Army's Ultra Light Vehicle Research Prototype

U.S. Army Testing Platform For Future Military Vehicles

While no military strategist can predict with absolute certainty where future conflicts might happen, Army researchers have designed a vehicle that's fuel-efficient, versatile and survivable in nearly any environment.

At the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC) in Warren, final testing is beginning on an Ultra Light Vehicle (ULV) Research Prototype to meet a wide range of military challenges.

Mike Karaki, program manager for the ULV, said the ULV vehicle

platform includes technologies to equip soldiers for missions across a full spectrum of mobility challenges while keeping occupants safe and using fuel efficiently.

Karaki said the information the U.S. Army is gleaned from testing the new technologies will be used for future military vehicle development and design.

"This is not a vehicle going into production, it's a test platform for the development of technology and systems for future military vehicles," said Bruce Huff-

Lack of Skilled Workers Hampers Growth

The greatest challenge for Oakland County and Metro Detroit employers to overcome is the virtually non-existent pipeline of young workers to fill available jobs and insufficient training programs to meet current demand.

That observation comes from a report called the Skills Needs Assessment Project (SNAP), which was based on a survey sent to manufacturers in Oakland and surrounding counties.

The results of the study were released by Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson at a meeting of about 250 employers, educators and community leaders at the Troy Marriott Hotel on Sept. 25, during a conference called "Business Works in Oakland County."

The study's purpose was to determine how to improve manufacturing capabilities in Oakland County and metro Detroit.

The Sept. 25 conference provided Patterson, the Oakland County Workforce Development Board and the Michigan Works! program with a chance to discuss the survey and some of the services available to employees and employers.

The survey found that increased technical skills for job applicants and better worker recruitment techniques for employers are recommended to help advanced manufacturers fill job openings.

"I think we've hit a raw nerve with the survey," Patterson said.

"We now have documented evidence for employers as to the skills they need to put people to work in good paying jobs."

The 48-page survey provided an in-depth look at advanced manufacturing and how educators can best prepare their curricula and students for employment in that field, said Steve Huber, Marketing and Communications officer for the county's Department of Economic Development and Community Affairs.

The survey also identified the skills and education that job seekers need to qualify for one of a host of attractive advanced manufacturing opportunities. And, it identified the top 14 jobs in advanced manufacturing, the median salary, the educational requirements and the number of job openings expected from now until 2018.

The survey said the most difficult job to fill was mechanical engineer, followed by tool-and-die makers and machinists, Huber said. The complete report is available online at www.AdvantageOakland.com.

"We've been attempting to rebuild an economy by trading employees between companies," said Deputy County Executive Matthew Gibb. "We hear every day that this company or that company is taking five employees from someone else instead of addressing the core issue."

"We have a lack of interest in training in careers that are the

very backbone of our economy here. We have to quit trading employees like baseball cards and get them interested in these careers like those available in advanced manufacturing."

Advanced manufacturing was chosen because of the significant job growth expected in that sector within the next three years and because companies have been unable to operate at full capacity because they can't find skilled workers, Huber said.

University of Michigan Economists George Fulton and Don Grimes predicted in an economic forecast of job growth that advanced manufacturing will add 4,125 jobs by 2015. Patterson and the Workforce Development Board determined that advanced manufacturing should be examined to help answer why demand far outweighed the supply of qualified workers and provide possible solutions.

Among the issues:

- The pipeline of qualified employees that once met the needs of advanced manufacturers no longer exists;

- Advanced manufacturing jobs require strong basic and technical skills. Employers said they can't find qualified workers for current job openings and future opening will go unfilled.

"Employers have told us they're ready to hire, they want to hire, but they can't find

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