

GMC, Chevy to Introduce CNG Version of Sierra, Silverado; Bi-Fuel in Express, Savana

Chevrolet and GMC will offer new bi-fuel versions of the 2015 Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra heavy-duty trucks, as well as all-new dedicated compressed natural gas (CNG) versions of the 2014 Chevrolet Express and GMC Savana full-size passenger vans next year.

The announcement was made Oct. 1 at the Green Fleet Conference and Expo in Phoenix.

The conference focused on clean technologies and alternative-fuel vehicles for fleet operations.

"With these new vehicles, General Motors offers the most comprehensive lineup of manufacturer-engineered, validated and warranted CNG vehicles, helping fleet managers manage their budget and reduce their carbon footprint," said Ed Peper, U.S. vice president, GM Fleet and Commercial Sales.

"Natural gas is less costly at the pump and significantly reduces carbon dioxide emissions, compared to other liquid fuels."

The bi-fuel versions of Silverado HD and Sierra HD – which are equipped to run on either gasoline or natural gas – expand the range of available configurations to 2500HD and 3500HD pickup models in all cab styles and 2WD and 4WD drivetrains, said spokesperson Pamela Flores. The 2014 Express and Savana passenger vans join a dedicated CNG lineup that includes cargo versions of the vehicles.

The CNG fuel tanks and complementing fuel systems used in the trucks and vans are installed at a secondary location and delivered to customers from Chevrolet and GMC dealerships, Flores said. The vehicles are fully warranted and validated by GM.

"These vehicles meet the rigorous GM standards for safety, reliability and durability," said Peper. "They're backed by a comprehensive five-year/100,000-mile transferable powertrain limited warranty, too, meaning we back these vehicles for the long haul."

All major components associated with the CNG systems have GM service part numbers for broad availability throughout the largest dealer network in the United States, Flores said. Production for the bi-fuel trucks and CNG vans is scheduled to begin

early next year. The order and delivery process for the vehicles is the same as ordering any other vehicle option. Orders will be accepted closer to the start of production.

The trucks' 6.0L V8 engine features special hardened valves and valve seats that enables it to run on CNG or gasoline, Flores said. Separate fuel tanks enable the driver to switch between fuels at the push of a button. The system automatically switches to gasoline when the CNG tank is depleted. Using both fuels, the trucks have an approximate total driving range of 650 miles.

The 2014 CNG versions of the Chevrolet Express and GMC Savana passenger vans join CNG cargo vans that GM has offered

for several years, Flores said.

The vehicles are built with the same gaseous fuel-ready 6.0L V8 as the bi-fuel Silverado and Sierra trucks, but are equipped with dedicated CNG fuel systems – available in three- or four-tank models on cargo vans and exclusively with the three-tank design on the passenger van models.

The new CNG passenger vans offer an approximate 200-mile driving range, as do three-tank versions of the cargo vans. With the four-tank configuration, the range on the cargo vans extends to approximately 300 miles.

Compressed natural gas is one of the cleanest-burning alternative fuels, compared with petroleum products. Natural gas-powered vehicles show an average 80



GMC 2015 Sierra 2500

percent reduction in ozone-forming emissions, compared with gasoline combustion.

More than 99 percent of the natural gas used in the U.S. comes from domestic or other North American sources, Flores said.

CNG helps customers significantly reduce the environmental impact of their vehicles and its

abundance makes it a viable economic alternative for drivers living in areas with easy access to CNG filling stations, with costs roughly half that of gasoline.

For many customers, the incremental investment in CNG vehicles can be recouped within a few years and the lower cost of the fuel enables a significant reduction in daily operating costs.

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Ford Buys Local App Development Firm, Livio Radio

Ford recently acquired the Ferndale-based Livio Radio, a five-year-old developer of in-vehicle connectivity software.

The deal was for less than \$10 million and will make Livio a wholly-owned Ford subsidiary. The automaker plans to retain the company's 11 full-time employees, said Paul Mascarenas, Ford's chief technical officer.

"Livio has solutions which are largely software-based that allow our customers to bring their content into the vehicle through their mobile device," said Mascarenas, who added that Ford and Livio will work toward developing an industry standard for smartphone-to-vehicle communications.

Livio will report to Ford's electrical and electronics systems engineering division. Livio founder and CEO Jake Sigal said joining with Ford will help his company's efforts to promote a single standard for in-vehicle connectivity.

Car companies are now using a variety of software, which makes it harder for app developers to get their apps into cars, Sigal said. Livio was founded in 2008, with funding coming from a \$10,000 loan from Sigal's parents.

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