

Ford's Auto Start/Stop to Find Its Way into More Models

The future is coming faster than you think.

By the year 2017, Ford will make its start/stop technology available on 70 percent of its North American vehicle lineup, said company spokesperson Amanda Zusman.

The technology is a major part of the automaker's Blueprint for Sustainability, Zusman said.

Ford is also researching dynamic cruise control, a breakthrough technology that predicts road conditions to optimize fuel economy.

"Simply put, Auto Start-Stop helps customers use less fuel, which is an important component of Ford's Blueprint for Sustainability," said Bob Fascetti, vice president, Ford Global Powertrain.

"By making Auto Start-Stop available on more vehicles, we are working to be part of the solution to environmental sustainability with effective, fuel-saving technologies."

Auto Start-Stop turns off the engine when a vehicle stops, while an advanced battery powers vehicle accessories and systems in place of the engine – saving fuel, Fascetti said.

The engine restarts instantly when the driver begins to release the brake pedal.

Actual fuel savings varies and depends on driving patterns, Zusman said. While average improvement in fuel efficiency equals roughly 3.5 percent, those who drive in heavy traffic – such as congested urban environments – could see fuel efficiency increase by as much as 10 percent.

It also provides a meaningful reduction to CO2 emissions that are avoided during long idle times.

Ford has years of experience with Auto Start-Stop via its electrified powertrain hybrid and plug-in hybrid offerings, and the feature is popular on a host of Ford models in Europe, Zusman said.

By year-end, Ford expects to sell more than 500,000 vehicles equipped with Auto Start-Stop globally.

In the United States, Auto Start-Stop is available on the 2014 Ford Fusion with 1.5-liter EcoBoost.

The expansion of Auto Start-Stop marks a milestone in Ford's Blueprint for Sustainability, which includes a range of new

technologies to improve vehicle efficiency, Zusman said.

Another milestone is the award-winning 1.0-liter EcoBoost engine that goes on sale in the 2014 Fiesta. Its 45-mpg highway rating is the highest of any non-hybrid, gasoline-powered car in America.

The 1.0-liter EcoBoost Fiesta outperforms some competitor diesel and hybrid offerings, while providing the most powerful entry in the subcompact class with an SAE-certified 123 horsepower and 125 lb.-ft. of torque.

Looking to the future of the Blueprint for Sustainability, Ford is also researching dynamic cruise control, Zusman said.

The advanced system enhances real-world fuel economy performance through optimized torque control, which minimizes fuel consumption while maximizing powertrain efficiencies.

Dynamic cruise control modifies the driver-selected set speed in response to not only current road conditions, but also to predicted road conditions – all on-board and in real time, with no Internet connection or stored databases.

Ford research shows this feature could improve fuel efficiency up to 10 percent, depending on route.

"Think of this as cruise control technology that thinks," said Dimitar Filev, senior technical leader, Ford Research and Development.

"While this is a research-based technology now, its objective is to think fuel economy first."

Other fuel-saving technologies developed under the plan available on Ford vehicles today, Zusman said, include:

- 100 percent use of electric power-assisted steering, which improves fuel efficiency by 3 percent to 5 percent;

- Six-speed automatic transmissions are now fully deployed across the lineup; six-speed transmissions improve fuel efficiency by 4 percent to 6 percent. EcoBoost engines are now offered as an option on 90 percent of Ford vehicles, delivering better fuel efficiency with great power compared with traditional gasoline engines.

And, by 2017, all of Ford's vehicles in North America will give their owners the fuel-saving auto start/stop capability.

Discounted Rates Now Available at Gilmore Museum

The Gilmore Car Museum, effective immediately, is offering new discounted rates.

The nonprofit museum, which is northeast of Kalamazoo, Mich., in Hickory Corners, is admitting all K-12 school groups free. It's also offering special discounted family rates and an extension of their youth admission rate to include those up to 17 years old.

The new rate package, termed the "Gilmore Promise," is to make learning exciting and accessible to everyone in the community, said Director of Development David Hatfield.

"Tis the season for the spirit of giving," said Hatfield, "and we would like to give families in the community the gift of reduced admission by offering a discounted package – two adults and an unlimited number of youths for just \$46."

In addition, all organized educational groups can make arrangements to visit the museum free of charge.

"We look forward to making the heritage of the American automobile accessible to everyone," said the museum's Director of Education Fred Colgren.

The Gilmore Car Museum's exhibits range from the cars of the 1890s – including rare steam and electric cars – to the classics of the 1930s, the innovative Tucker of the '40s and the jet-powered Chrysler of the '60s.

Other featured displays include re-created car dealerships, "The Other Motor City," where Kalamazoo-built automobiles (such as the iconic Checker Cab) are showcased, and the world's largest public museum dedicated solely to the Model A Ford.

A new special exhibit is called, "American Legends: Hot Rods & Customs," which brings together some of the best-known hot rods and customs of all time, including examples from renowned customizer George Barris, the 1941 Ford tail-dragger that inspired a Mattel's Hot Wheels toy, and the famous 'Lil Deuce Coupe' of Beach Boys fame.

Ford's Joe Hinrichs Sees Slower Growth in Auto Sales

By JUSTIN PRITCHARD and DEE-ANN DURBIN
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) – Joe Hinrichs was named Ford Motor Co.'s president of the Americas one year ago, after a three-year stint as head of Ford's Asian operations.

It was a bumpy start. Quality issues delayed sales of the new Lincoln MKZ sedan last spring. Then, over the summer, the government cut its fuel mileage estimates for Ford's C-Max hybrid. Ford had to send checks to unhappy owners who had complained that the C-Max wasn't meeting its advertised numbers.

Ford has celebrated some successes. U.S. sales rose 12 percent through October, outpacing the industry. The Ford's F-Series pickup truck has retained its commanding lead in the market despite newer competition from General Motors and Chrysler. Last month, F-Series sales passed the total number sold in all of 2012, and should post the best annual total since 2006. Sales of Ford's Fusion sedan and Escape SUV have also been strong.

Here's what Hinrichs told The Associated Press on the sidelines of the Los Angeles Auto Show in late November:

Q: You've been in this job for a year now. What have you learned about this market? How does this challenge compare to the challenge of running Asia?

Hinrichs: I think when you talk about the North America market, especially the United States, we continue to see an exciting opportunity for market growth for Ford. We've gained more market share this year than any other automaker. We've had record profits through the first three quarters of the year. So the key for North America is continuing the positive momentum. Asia-Pacific, especially China, has tremendous growth opportunities – beyond compare around the world. But also, it's the same thing: Great product launches lead to great market share gains lead to profitable growth. So I think at the high level it's similar, but of course the markets are very different.

Q: What do you think U.S. auto sales will look like in the coming year? Have consumers recovered faster than you expected?

Hinrichs: Consumers have recovered faster than I think anyone expected if you go back to 2008 or 2009. If you look at the last three calendar years, based

on where we project 2013 – so '11, '12 and '13 – the U.S. industry will gain over a million units of sales each successive year over the previous year.

The consumer has been very resilient. A lot of that has to do with the average age of the car portfolio. At 11.4 years, it's the oldest it's ever been, so replacement demand is a big part of it. I think we'll continue to see growth in the industry in the years ahead, but at a slower pace, which I think will be healthy for the industry.

We see next year the GDP growth in the U.S. economy being about 2.5 percent, and over time as replacement demand, while still important, diminishes, the economy is going to have to push the growth. And that's not just happening at the degree it would need to push the industry a lot further ahead.

Q: Does the U.S. have the manufacturing capacity it needs to keep up with growing demand? If we don't want to open new plants, do we need to make the current ones even more flexible?

Hinrichs: Our focus has been on not adding additional brick and mortar, but focusing on getting more out of the current

plants. Increased line rates, tag relief (when workers take breaks one at a time) in lieu of mass relief, more flexibility in the body shops, adding shifts in some cases. And that will be our strategy for the foreseeable future.

We want to make sure that we maintain a low fixed cost structure so that in the inevitable cyclical of our business, we can maintain profitability through the downturns as well.

I think the general response to your industry question is there is enough capacity. Of course, we're interested to make sure that additional capacity doesn't come from just exporting from Japan with the yen advantage. We've been very outspoken about that. But we do think there's enough capacity for a rational, 16-plus million in the industry, to work for everybody.

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