

Tech Center News™

WARREN, MICHIGAN

VOL. 38 NO. 23

Covers the Tech Center and the Immediate Area

FEBRUARY 10, 2014

Customers Take GM Engineers to School

Engineers behind the Chevrolet Corvette, Cadillac CTS, GMC Sierra and Buick Enclave are learning on dealership sales floors and in service bays what customers like and dislike about the cars and trucks they helped create.

So far, the General Motors' Professional Development Assignment has dispatched 90 engineers nationwide to meet with field service engineers, dealership sales managers and after-sales service technicians with many more to follow this year.

Their goals: identify opportunities for making better cars and trucks and improving customer satisfaction.

"The engineers who have experienced this program have initiated or enhanced product improvements already under way," said Mark Reuss, GM executive vice president of Global Product Development, Purchasing & Supply Chain.

"They are acting as change agents for their departments, and their lessons fuel the customer-centric culture at GM."

Launched last year, the program sends engineers selected by their group leaders on a month-long tour of Chevrolet, Cadillac, Buick, GMC and competitor dealerships in major markets from Connecticut to California. At each dealership, the engineers shadow sales and service personnel and meet with customers.

"This program has taught me how important our dealers are to our customers," said Michael



GM engineer Marquita Adams and service technician Herb Figueroa.

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Sweeney Named GM's U.S. VP Of Chevrolet

General Motors named Brian Sweeney, currently U.S. vice president, Buick-GMC Sales and Service, to the position of U.S. vice president, Chevrolet.

Sweeney will be responsible for Chevrolet Sales, Service and Marketing in the U.S., effective March 1.

Don Johnson, 56, currently U.S. vice president, Chevrolet Sales and Service, has elected to retire from General Motors after 33 years of service with GM in North America, Asia, Latin America, Africa and the Middle East.

"Don has contributed to GM's



Brian Sweeney

success in markets around the world, and we wish him and his family well as he concludes his

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Heavy Winter Blues Hit GM Dealerships

General Motors dealers delivered 171,486 vehicles in the United States in January.

Retail sales were down 10 percent year over year, although retail deliveries of passenger cars were up slightly. Fleet deliveries declined 18 percent, due to a planned reduction in rental vehicle sales. Total sales were down 12 percent.

"We are building long-term value for our customers and it starts with award-winning new products," said Kurt McNeil, U.S. vice president of Sales Operations.

"We have major launches under way and we are going to accelerate brand-building and

other growth initiatives, which include executing our winning strategy to sell more pickup trucks with larger cabs, more features and advanced technology."

Half of GM's light-duty pickup sales in the fourth quarter of 2013 were premium-contented models that transacted at prices of \$40,000 or more, said GM sales reporting spokesman Jim Cain. That compares with about one-third of sales in the 2013 calendar year and 20 percent in 2012. The mix continued to improve in January.

Key features, depending on the model, include superior fuel economy, quieter cabins, higher towing and payload ratings, and

better resale value, Cain said. For example, the 2014 Chevrolet Silverado 1500 earned a "Best Resale Value" award from Kelley Blue Book as one of the Top 10 models in the industry.

Image-building initiatives include prominent advertising during the Super Bowl, the Winter Olympics and the NCAA March Madness/Final Four basketball tournament, Cain said. In addition, the Chevrolet Silverado "Hands-On" Truck tour will visit more than 100 locations this year, with 21 events scheduled for the first quarter.

January sales highlights in-

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KBB Says Big 3 Score Well In 5-Year Cost-to-Own Study

by Jim Stickford

According to Kelley Blue Book, the Big Three offer some great long-term values for car buyers.

Ford, GM and Chrysler all had vehicles listed at "Best in Category" in KBB's most recent list of "5-Year Cost to Own" award winners.

These awards are based on Kelley Blue Book's 5-Year Cost to Own data for new cars for the initial five-year ownership period, said KBB spokesperson Chintan Talati.

While depreciation (or loss of value) and fuel costs may be the greatest expense incurred in owning a vehicle, there are other factors that can have a significant impact on a consumer's pocketbook. Available on Kelley Blue Book's KBB.com, "5-Year Cost to Own" information takes into consideration depreciation, expected fuel costs, finance and insurance fees, maintenance and repair costs, and state fees for new models, Talati said.

Kelley Blue Book's "5-Year Cost to Own Awards," like all new- and used-car information provided by KBB.com, exist to help shoppers make more informed new-car buying decisions by breaking down typical ownership cost details and naming the brands and models with the lowest projected five-year total, Talati said.

2014 model-year vehicles' projected ownership costs are based on the average Kelley Blue Book "5-Year Cost to Own" data for the initial five-year ownership period, Talati said.

"New-car shoppers naturally want to know how much a car

will cost up front," said Dan Ingle, vice president of vehicle valuations for Kelley Blue Book. "However, sometimes an even more expensive car can actually save you money during the first five years of ownership."

"Kelley Blue Book's '5-Year Cost to Own' information evaluates the other out-of-pocket expenses drivers will incur, which helps consumers choose the vehicle that fits them and their wallets best, helping save money down the road."

One notable "5-Year Cost to Own Award" winner is the 2014 Buick Encore, Ingle said, which is this year's "5-Year Cost to Own: Luxury Compact SUV/Crossover" category winner.

The Encore beat out the Acura RDX and BMW X3 in all categories except maintenance and repairs.

Encore offers depreciation costs 35.7 percent lower than RDX and an impressive 63.7 percent lower than X3.

In addition, this year's 5-Year Cost to Own: Plug-In Vehicle category winner, the 2014 Chevrolet Spark EV, bests the Chevrolet Volt and Honda Accord Plug-In Hybrid in nearly all ownership factors. Spark EV not only offers the lowest state fees, but also the lowest insurance, outperforming Volt by 50.5 percent and is 22.6 percent lower than Accord Plug-In Hybrid.

Kelley Blue Book's "5-Year Cost to Own" information is developed using Kelley Blue Book residual values to calculate depreciation costs, Talati said. Kelley Blue Book calculates total ownership costs for new vehicles



2014 Buick Verano



2014 Jeep Patriot



2014 Lincoln MKX

by applying a sophisticated valuation methodology along with critical financial data from third-party providers.

Other Detroit OEM winners:

the Jeep Patriot in the Compact SUV/Crossover category for the second year in a row; Chevy Im-

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Bosch is Selected For Kia Charging And Installation

Bosch Automotive Service Solutions has been selected as a charging station and installation services partner for the new 2015 Kia Soul EV, which debuted at the 2014 Chicago Auto Show.

Bosch will provide a suite of 240V charging options, including its Power Xpress and Bosch Power Max charging stations, as well as full-service installation for Soul EV drivers.

A Bosch vehicle charging advisor will support customers through the entire installation process, including:

- No-cost, on-site quotation;
- Choosing the best charging station to meet each driver's individual needs;
- Local permit application, coordination, and inspection;
- Installation completed by a Bosch-certified electrician.

"As Kia launches its Soul EV in the U.S. market, we continue to expand EV infrastructure as we have over the last several years," said Kevin Mull, vice president of Business Development at Bosch AutomotiveService Solutions.

"We are very proud to be one of the recommended charging solutions partners for Kia Motors America. Purchasing a Bosch Level 2 charging station and installation service will help Soul EVdrivers charge their vehicles faster, alleviating range anxiety and inspiring confidence in their new EV."

Scheduled to go on sale in the third quarter of 2014, the 2015 Soul EV will be Kia's first all-electric, zero-emissions vehicle.

For more information on Bosch Electric Vehicle Solutions, visit www.pluginnow.com.

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