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2015 Chevrolet SUVs – Tahoe, left, and Suburban

GM Large SUVs Improve on Fuel Efficiency

People who drive big SUVs say they need big SUVs. What they don't need are big gas bills when they fill up.

That's why GM has worked hard to improve the mileage on its big SUVs, said spokesperson Michelle Malcho.

The new 2015 full-size SUVs from Chevrolet and GMC go farther on a tank of gas than outgoing models, raising highway fuel economy by nearly 10 percent, Malcho said.

The Chevrolet Tahoe and Suburban and GMC Yukon and Yukon XL with the standard 5.3L engine get an EPA-estimated 16 mpg in the city and 23 mpg on the highway with two-wheel drive – a nearly 10 percent increase in highway mileage over the previous models and 7 percent greater city mileage.

The Yukon Denali and Yukon XL Denali models feature an exclusive 6.2L V8 rated at 420 horsepower and 460 lb.-ft. of torque. No other full-size SUV offers as much power and torque, said Malcho. Denali models offer 15 city/21 highway in two-wheel-drive models, she added.

Improving mileage in large SUVs is important for GM, Malcho said, because GM has about 75 percent of the market.

"The market share of the large SUV has remained consistent over the years," Malcho said. "It's approximately 1.6 percent of the marketplace. That's whether 10 million or 15 million vehicles a year are sold."

"Last year, GM had three-quarters of the market, translating into about 264,000 sales. The Tahoe and the Suburban accounted for more than 50 percent of GM's share of large SUV sales."

People have consistently purchased large SUVs for several reasons, Malcho said – they have large families, they have cargo needs, they have work needs. And if GM can offer them large SUVs with the best mileage, she said, that can only help the automaker keep its domination of the market segment.

"We were able to make improvements in the aerodynamics," Malcho said. "If you look at the new Tahoe, you'll see that it's a little shorter and a little wider. Add to that our new EcoBoost engine, which comes with the new Silverado, and you're talking about a vehicle that gets better mileage."

Not all manufacturers produce

large SUVs, Malcho said. Right now, GM's biggest competition comes from Ford, which produces the Expedition and the Explorer. Making these engine improvements along with better aerodynamics, she said, is part of staying ahead of the competition.

The new SUVs are just starting to hit the dealerships, Malcho said.

"We received great feedback from the critics who saw the vehicles last year when we first introduced them, and they were very popular at the recent auto shows," Malcho said.

"But now that the vehicles are hitting the dealerships, it will be the first time that we get feedback from the public."

Ford Sets Industry Pace with New Aluminum-Filled F-150

by Jim Stickford

Ford's announcement about aluminum has gotten people talking.

The Dearborn automaker at the 2014 North American International Auto Show said its 2015 F-150 pickup would be lighter because of innovative uses of aluminum.

Ford Manufacturing Research Manager Peter Friedman said that high-strength aluminum alloys, already used in aerospace, commercial transportation, energy and many other rugged industries, will be used throughout the F-150 body for the first time, improving dent-and-ding resistance, and saving weight.

Overall, he said, the move saves up to 700 pounds of weight, helping the F-150 tow more, haul more, accelerate quicker and stop shorter, and

contributing to efficiency.

Ford engineers selected these high-strength, military-grade aluminum alloys because of the metals' unique ability to withstand tough customer demands.

"Our objective was to find materials that allowed us to design the truck to be as tough as – or tougher than – the current model, yet could help it be hundreds of pounds lighter for better capability and fuel economy," Friedman said.

"Out of all the materials we tested, we carefully selected only certain grades of aluminum that met our high performance standards in all of our tests, while allowing us to trim hundreds of pounds from the truck."

Karl Vaughn, a metallurgist with Metallurgical Processing Company in Warren, said that when he heard exactly where Ford was going with aluminum,

GM Tech Center Retiree Mike Oginsky Talks of Automaker's Support and His Work with Explorer Scouts

by Jim Stickford

As the saying goes, the show must go on.

For 12 years, GM employee Mike Oginsky helped Explorer Scouts build a vehicle to enter in to the annual Autorama show in Detroit.

At the same time, GM sponsored that Scout organization.

Oginsky said GM's funding of the Explorer Scouts ended when the company went into bankruptcy.

But, even though Oginsky retired from GM in 2012 and no longer helps scouts build a car, he still manages to display a vehicle at the Autorama show.

It seems in 1991 Oginsky purchased a classic 1967 Camaro and fixed it up. He first displayed it at the 1993 GM Tech Center Car Show. He even won fifth place one year at the Autorama show.

"I saw the four cars that beat mine in the category I was competing in," Oginsky said. "Those were great cars and I fully understand why they beat mine. They were really great cars. I was just glad to be considered in their league."

Oginsky, who just turned 63, is a member of UAW Local 160, and

worked for GM for 28 years in various capacities. He was based at the Tech Center in Warren.

But he didn't always work for GM.

Before that, "I was working as a painter for Suburban Olds body shop," Oginsky said. "A neighbor asked me for a favor and I painted the car of his soon-to-be daughter-in-law."

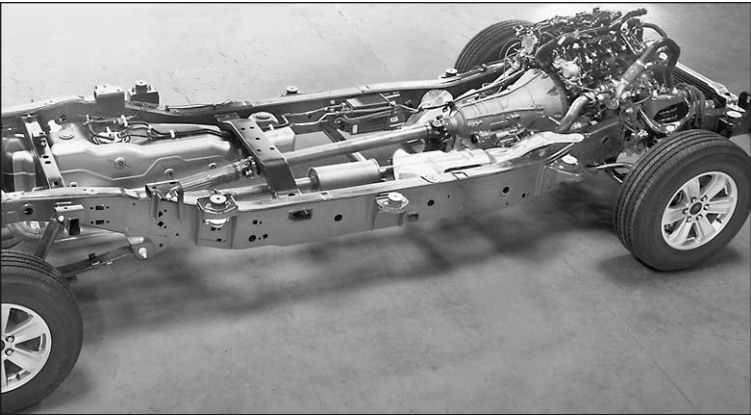
It seems that Oginsky did such a great job that the neighbor said he should work for GM. It took Oginsky three years to get hired and every time he drove by the Tech Center before his hiring, he said to himself, "I'm going to work there."

While at the Tech Center, Oginsky painted prototypes and pre-prototypes. He retired on April 1, 2012, "because it was time."

And while Oginsky was working at GM, he was asked to help paint a vehicle with GM's Explorer Scouts. That was in the late 1990s.

"It was supposed to be a one-time thing," Oginsky said. "Bob Mayer was a scout leader – in fact, he was the neighbor who asked me to paint his daughter-in-law's car. But even though it was supposed to be only one

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Ford F-150's new aluminum-filled frame

the only thing he could say was, "Wow."

Vaughn said he can't speak too much about Ford's designs because he hasn't seen them, but what he does know impresses him.

"I've worked with aluminum a

lot," Vaughn said. "Mostly aircraft frames that use aircraft-grade aluminum. The virtue of aluminum is that it's light. Its weakness is its strength. A sheet of aluminum is so-so in strength

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As Z/28's flying wheels land, new PTM system helps keep full power.

2014 Camaro Z/28 Features 'Flying Car' Logic

Engineers call it "flying car" logic.

On the 2014 Chevrolet Camaro Z/28, the Performance Traction Management (PTM) system delivers faster lap times on an undulating race track by helping maintain the car's full power and momentum even if the tires briefly lose contact with the ground, in certain track conditions.

Created for track use only, the "flying car" logic woven into the Z/28's standard PTM system integrates the chassis mode selection, Traction Control and Active Handling Systems, said Bill Wise, Camaro Z/28 vehicle performance engineer.

Each is tuned specifically in

the Z/28 for optimal track performance and consistency, and is activated by the driver pressing a button in the center console.

Without "flying car logic," the PTM would interpret the force reduction on the tires as a loss of traction and reduce torque to restore it, Wise said. Such an intervention would likely slow the car and reduce momentum.

"PTM uses torque, lateral acceleration and rear-axle wheel slip to define the amount of traction control required, but when the car clears a rise on the track, it normally wants to decrease torque to increase traction," said Wise.

"The unique logic in the system uses the ride-height sensors

to determine the reduction in force on the tires that's unique to track driving and allows the car to continue with uninterrupted momentum and, ultimately, a better lap time."

GM spokesman Chad Lyons said bringing back the Z/28 is a big deal because there has been a demand for such a vehicle for a while.

"The original Z/28 built in the late 1960s was a track car," Lyons said. "If you look at our current lineup of Camaros you'll see that we have a pretty deep lineup and you can get all kinds of Camaros."

"Now you can get the Z/28. The only option that comes with it is

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