

Bolt EV Concept is 'Game-Changer' – Barra

by Jim Stickford

Electric and hybrid vehicles aren't special cars that people will buy to save the environment – they will only work in the marketplace when the value proposition for the customer adds up to savings.

That's how GM's Mark Reuss explained Volt marketing plans at the media preview of the 2015 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS).

It was at that show that GM introduced the 2016 Volt to the world.

Reuss, executive vice president of GM's Global Product Development, Purchasing and Supply Chain, said the new version of GM's extended-range electric vehicle (EREV) gives customers that proposition value, through cost.

With tax incentives, buyers can get a new Volt for about \$30,000 – a drop of about \$10,000 from the previous model.

And the 2016 features a new, 192-cell/18.4-kWh lithium-ion battery pack and new, 111-kW two-motor drive unit. The Voltec system is up to 12 percent more efficient and approximately 100 pounds (45 kg) lighter than the previous system, Reuss said, adding that the Volt also goes from 0-60 in 8.4 seconds.

What that means, Reuss said,



Mary Barra and Chevrolet's Alan Batey with concept Bolt at NAIAS

is that the drivetrain is lighter and the battery system is more efficient, effectively giving the new Volt a range that will allow owners to drive more than 1,000 miles on average between gasoline fill-ups with a total estimated driving range of more than 400 miles – 50 of those in all-electric mode.

"The improvements in the effi-

ciency and performance of the 2016 Volt are driven by what owners said they wanted in the next-generation model: more range, better fuel economy and stronger acceleration," said Andrew Farah, vehicle chief engineer.

"Building on General Motors'

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Marchionne: Industry Must Lower Development Costs

by Jim Stickford

Fiat Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne spoke to the media at the 2015 NAIAS car show in Detroit about the company and its future.

On the subject of a possible merger with other automakers, Marchionne said the company was not in any talks "at the moment" to consolidate with other automakers.

"Even if we were, I doubt this would be the forum in which we'd announce it," Marchionne said.

"I will reconfirm that there are discussions with others about specific projects in which FCA and others would collaborate.

"The longer I stay in this business, the more I realize that there's a large amount of capital being used by automakers for development that could be better used to develop businesses if we joined forces.

"The cost of development is well in excess of what I think a mature industry can well afford."

Marchionne went on to say that development costs force executives to take huge gambles with capital. If one of the gambles doesn't pay off, it can sink an automaker.



Sergio Marchionne

He added that right now the markets reflect the attitude that the auto industry doesn't use capital well even in this low-interest environment.

"I find it incredible that it took us this long to realize this," Marchionne said.

But, he added, getting automakers to collaborate is a difficult proposition for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the ego of auto executives.

"To use an American expres-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

F-150 Named North American Truck of Year

By Jeff Karoub and Tom Krisher
AP Business Writers

DETROIT (AP) – Ford's big move to aluminum for the body of its flagship F-150 truck has helped it garner some additional material: The hardware that comes with the North American Truck of the Year Award.

Ford took the top truck honor last week alongside the Volkswagen Golf, which was named car of the year. The winners, voted on by about 60 automotive journalists, were unveiled at the start of press previews for the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

"Clearly, the materials have a lot to do with the story of the

truck," Ford President of the Americas Joe Hinrichs said, though he added he's "most proud" of what the material does for the vehicle's capabilities.

The aluminum body allowed Ford to reduce the truck's weight by 700 pounds compared with last year's model. That gave it greater hauling and towing capacity and better fuel economy. The lighter weight also makes the truck accelerate faster, stop quicker and handle better, he said.

Ford's truck sales, which amount to 20 percent of its North American sales, slowed last year as the company retooled factories to make the new one. Hinrichs said initial sales have been

strong with trucks sitting on dealer lots for an average of only five days. Only one factory, in Dearborn, is currently making the F-150, but a second factory in Kansas City will be ready by the end of March, he said.

Hinrichs predicted sales would pick up as both plants start supplying dealers.

The F-150 beat out Ford's Lincoln MKC and the Chevrolet Colorado for truck honors.

Volkswagen officials were pleasantly surprised by the VW Golf win.

"We didn't expect this award," said Michael Horn, VW's CEO in America, while praising competitors and fondly recalling driving a 1967 Mustang.



2015 F-150

"It's confirmation of the way we've chosen to go forth. It's a starting point to get back on track here in U.S."

Horn said the German automaker's U.S. sales were down last year but started to climb in the

final months of the year with the arrival of new models. He added the Golf, VW's top-selling model, also represents "the DNA of the brand" as well as its strategy for design, technology and marketing.

GM's Reuss: Goal of New CTS-V is 'Not to Compete with BMW, Mercedes – It's to Win'

by Jim Stickford

To expand the Cadillac brand, GM has to compete with the best in the world, and that's exactly what the 2016 CTS-V is designed to do, said Cadillac brand president Johan de Nysschen at the 2015 North American International Auto Show.

De Nysschen said the CTS-V will be launched in the late summer of 2015. It will come with 640 horsepower, 630 lb.-ft. of torque and a top speed of 200 mph.

"The new CTS-V reaches higher than its predecessors, leading Cadillac's product-driven expansion and elevation," de Nysschen said.

"It is the third generation of the acclaimed luxury sports sedan that launched the elite V-

Series a decade ago – and redefined Cadillac for a new generation of enthusiasts.

"V-Series represents the very best of the Cadillac brand – the pinnacle of our design and technical capabilities.

"The new CTS-V is the most compelling example of Cadillac's product substance and brand trajectory. The new CTS-V soars into the stratosphere of the most exhilarating luxury cars."

Comprehensive updates make the new CTS-V essentially two cars in one, de Nysschen said. One is a luxury sedan with sophisticated road manners, he said, and the other is a track-capable sports car straight from the factory.

It also introduces a new supercharged 6.2L V8 engine backed

by Cadillac's paddle-shift eight-speed automatic transmission and featuring launch control and Performance Algorithm Shifting.

"The philosophy is that one can't have too much horsepower provided you have a chassis that can handle it," de Nysschen said. "This is the most powerful car Cadillac has built in its 112-year history.

"It's a bold challenge to be sure, but only those who dare risk much will take the future. And Cadillac has dared much – but that's the Cadillac way."

With more horsepower and torque than the Mercedes-Benz 5.5L biturbo V8 and the BMW M-series 4.4L TwinPower (twin-turbo) V8, the new CTS-V is capa-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



De Nysschen with 2016 Cadillac CTS-V at the 2015 auto show

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GM Targeting 2016 Target of 10 Percent Profit

DETROIT (AP) – General Motors says it expects pretax earnings and profit margins to increase this year over last, after adjusting last year for recall costs.

The company also predicts improved automotive results in all of its regions. It gave no specific numbers.

GM is scheduled to release its fourth-quarter and 2014 earnings on Feb. 4.

GM also reiterated 2016 financial targets of 10 percent pretax profit margins in North America and a return to profitability in Europe.

It also expects to maintain strong profit margins in China. Profit margin is the percentage of revenue that a company gets to keep.

The company expects 9 percent to 10 percent profit margins overall by early next decade.

GM made the predictions at a Deutsche Bank conference for analysts in Detroit last week.

GM issued 84 recalls last year covering more than 30 million vehicles in North America, costing the company more than \$2.8 billion.

The spate of recalls began with faulty small-car ignition switches that are responsible for at least 45 deaths and 68 injuries. GM acknowledged knowing about the bad switches for more than a decade, yet it didn't start recalling the cars until early 2014.

CEO Mary Barra told the conference that the company didn't do everything perfectly on the recalls, but said it now has permanent systems, processes and behavior changes in place to make sure it doesn't happen again.

GM plans to reach its goals by leading in product and technology, expanding the Chevrolet and Cadillac brands globally and continuing to grow in China.

Company President Dan Ammann told the conference the company plans numerous new products during the next couple of years, including top-selling models such as the Chevrolet Cruze compact car, Chevy Malibu midsize car and Chevrolet Equinox small crossover SUV.

The company has 27 new models coming globally this year, and 38 in each of 2016 and 2017, he said.

"All major-volume entries get all-new models the next couple of years," Ammann said.

New Ram 1500 Rebel to be Launched in Second Quarter

by Jim Stickford

The Ram 1500 has been successful for Fiat Chrysler, but that doesn't mean there's no room for improvement.

And the public will have a chance to see just what Ram's done with the 2015 Rebel model of the 1500 next week at the North American International Auto Show at Cobo Center.

"Offering an off-road-style package on the Ram 1500 has been on our to-do list for some time, but the right combination didn't present itself until now," said Bob Hegbloom, president and CEO – Ram Truck Brand.

"The Rebel drops right into a core segment of the truck market with unique design cues and can-do attitude backed by Ram Truck engineering."

Rebel features an all-new grille with prominent billet silver "RAM" letter badge.

Departing from the brand's iconic "cross-hair" designs, the blacked-out Rebel grille tops a completely new black off-road front bumper design with a durable powder-coated surface, which incorporates a powder-coated, billet silver skid plate, new front tow hooks and new LED fog lamps. Black bezel bi-functional projector headlamps with LED marker lights lie beneath an aluminum, twin-snorkel sport hood.

Rebel's blacked-out front end continues on the flanks with black Power Wagon wheel-arch moldings, flat-black badge, mirrors and lower body panels.

The new trim features a two-tone paint scheme with black as a constant on the lower body, front to rear.

The Ram 1500 Rebel also features an all-new 17-inch aluminum wheel. Among the most elaborate designs found in mass production, the new one-piece wheel incorporates matte black painted accent pockets and multi-angled surfaces.

Continuing around to the rear view is a new "RAM" stamped tailgate with blacked-out lettering. The "Rebel" and "4X4" badge, Hegbloom said, emphasize the truck's uniqueness. The rear bumper is also treated with durable black powder coating with flared cutouts around dual chrome-tipped exhausts. Tail lamps incorporate black bezels to match forward lighting.

Rebel includes an optional backup camera, providing a better field of vision when maneuvering, Hegbloom said. A new tri-fold tonneau cover is embossed with the Ram logo.



Ram Brand Director Becky Blanchard and the Ram 1500 Rebel

The Ram 1500 Rebel will be available in five colors: Granite Crystal Metallic, Bright Silver Metallic, Flame Red, Bright White and Brilliant Black. Both monotone and two-tone paint options are offered.

Becky Blanchard, newly-appointed director of the Ram brand, said there is a real demand for a truck like the Rebel 1500.

"We listened to our customers," Blanchard said. "This truck has both capability and looks. It has the same towing capacity as a regular 1500, and it will be still available at an affordable price."

"We're not saying how much it will cost right now. The price will be released closer to the release date, which is expected to be sometime close to the end of the second quarter."

"The Rebel will be manufactured at our Warren Truck facility and we expect the Rebel to comprise between 5 and 10 percent of the Ram brand."

Blanchard said the Rebel was designed for the "bold customer." It allows them to express themselves, she said.

The truck has the capacity to tow dirt bikes to off-road locations, she said, or it can be used to drive off-road itself, adding that a lot of the features on the

Rebel are the sorts of things people would normally have to get in after-market shops.

"We know that people like to customize their trucks, so we just added those features to the Rebel," Blanchard said. "The advantage here is that all our customized features are factory tested and come with Ram warranties. I just hope we don't get SEMA too mad at us."

Blanchard said that the Rebel isn't Ram's only big announcement at this year's auto show. She said the brand also was able to announce that they upped the fuel efficiency of its "best-in-class mileage" engine from 28 to 29 mpg.

"The Ram EcoDiesel's mileage has improved," Blanchard said. "We knew demand for it would be strong when we introduced it. We expected sales to be about 10 percent of Ram sales, but no one forecast that it would get the 20 percent it has now."

Blanchard said she's been asked a lot about how fluctuations in fuel prices affect EcoDiesel sales.

"I have to say not much," Blanchard said. "While gas prices are under \$2 a gallon now, only a couple of months ago, they were closer to \$4. Diesel fuel prices, on the other hand, tend to be very stable over a long period of time,

so their sales aren't really affected by wild swings in fuel prices.

"Additionally, EcoDiesel owners like the fact that diesel trucks retain an additional 8 to 10 percent of value in the resale market."

Ignition Switch Death Count Up To 45 – Feinberg

NEW YORK (AP) – At least 45 people have died and 68 have been injured in crashes involving General Motors cars with defective ignition switches.

Attorney Kenneth Feinberg, who was hired by GM to compensate victims, updated the totals Jan. 12.

Feinberg has received 303 death claims and 2,407 injury claims, and is still reviewing 738 of them. So far, 112 claims are eligible for compensation.

GM was aware of faulty ignition switches in its Chevrolet Cobalts and other small cars for more than a decade, but it didn't recall them until 2014. The switches can slip out of the "on" position, causing the cars to stall, knocking out power steering and turning off the air bags.

Feinberg is accepting claims until Jan. 31.

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Buick Cascada to Go On Sale in Early 2016

by Jim Stickford

Buick has let its hair down by putting the top down.

Buick introduced the 2016 Cascada – a convertible that uses innovative powertrain and chassis technologies – at the 2015 North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

The Cascada will be the first Buick convertible offered in the United States in 25 years and the latest globally developed vehicle to join the brand's growing portfolio.

The Cascada goes on sale in early 2016, said Buick spokeswoman Lauren Indiveri.

"The new 2016 Buick Cascada is a beautiful, engaging convertible that represents the very best of the brand's global development practices," said Duncan Aldred, vice president of Buick.

"It's a car that will delight customers with its fun spirit and help drive the momentum that's fueling Buick's success."

The Cascada's 2+2 configuration offers comfortable room for four adults, said Indiveri.

She added that its "expressive" driving experience is rooted in a rigid body structure, Buick's sophisticated HiPer Strut front suspension and responsive Watts Z-link suspension in the rear – along with a 200-horsepower turbocharged engine.

And when it comes to dropping the top on a whim, Indiveri said, it lowers in only 17 seconds at speeds up to 31 mph.

"Cascada's driving enjoyment is rooted in technologies that make it more comfortable and refined," said Aldred.

"Its features work harmoniously to provide a safe, connected and confidence-inspiring driving experience."

Technology and safety highlights include:

- Buick IntelliLink with a seven-inch diagonal color touch screen featuring Text Message Alerts, Siri Eyes Free for Apple phones with an iOS 6 or newer operating system and navigation.

- OnStar 4G LTE with built-in Wi-Fi hotspot.

- Electronic rear-seat entry system that automatically powers the front seats forward by simply pressing the seatback forward.

It moves the seats back when the seatback is returned to the upright position.

- Electric safety belt presenters that use telescopic arms to slide the upper front safety belt assemblies from behind the front seat into closer reach for easier buckling.

- Rollover protection bars that deploy behind the rear seats when the possibility of a rollover is detected.

- Lane departure warning, rear park assist, rearview camera and Rainsense windshield wipers.

Designed from the outset as a convertible, Indiveri said the Cascada has a flowing, sculpted profile, with fast-raked A-pillars

that convey a wind-in-the-hair flair.

When lowered, the top folds completely beneath a hard tonneau behind the rear seats.

"The Cascada's design blends the suggestion of speed with sophisticated and uncompromising details," said Holt Ware, Buick exterior design director.

"Most convertibles are designed from existing coupes or sedans, meaning stowage of the top is an afterthought, but not this Buick. It looks handsome and has a premium appearance when the top is lowered – and a perfect, seamless profile when it's up."

The Cascada also has plenty of storage space for the trappings of a weekend getaway, Indiveri



2016 Buick Cascada convertible

said, including 13.4 cubic feet of cargo room with the top up and 9.8 cubic feet with the top down. The rear seatbacks fold down electronically to expand cargo capability for longer items.

The Cascada is driven by a 1.6L turbocharged engine rated at 200 horsepower.

With more than 100 horsepower per liter, it's one of the most

power-dense engines in the segment, Indiveri said, adding that it delivers strong torque, estimated at 206 lb.-ft., with an overboost feature that briefly pushes torque to an estimated 221 lb.-ft.

Direct injection and variable valve timing complement the turbo engine's performance with

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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Ford is About More Than Innovation, It's Also About Performance – CEO Mark Fields

All work and no play can make for a dull automaker, but that wasn't Ford's problem at the 2015 NAIAS in Detroit last week.

Bill Ford Jr. addressed the world media at the car show on Jan. 12, saying that Ford Motor Company is a vibrant and relevant automaker today because it innovates.

"Ford has always been driven to improve the lives of drivers through innovation," Ford said. "We want Ford to be green, global and high tech. And now, green has become a core value of Ford."

"Ford has become a high-tech company. It is leading the industry in the use of advanced lightweight materials. We just announced a joint project between Dow Chemical and the federal government to develop lightweight carbon fiber materials."

Ford CEO Mark Fields added that the auto industry is about taking advantage of the high-tech revolution that's going on.

"In this brave new world, the winners will be the innovators, the disrupters," Fields said. "At Ford, the spirit of innovation is accelerating. Ford Smart Mobility is taking Ford to the next level. We've just opened up an expanded tech lab in Palo Alto, California. Our innovations have put Ford on the fast track."

But, Fields said, Ford is about more than innovation. The company is also about performance.

Ford vice president of Global Product Development Raj Nair agreed, and told the media about the new Ford Shelby GT350R.

The new vehicle, Nair said, is a true performance vehicle.

"The Shelby GT350R Mustang is a no-compromise car in the pursuit of maximum track capability," said Nair. "It is a thoroughbred street car making use of technology and ingenuity to deliver performance few enthusiasts have ever experienced."

The car features the first-ever

production V8 from Ford with a flat-plane crankshaft – the most powerful naturally aspirated engine Ford has ever produced – plus a specially tuned suspension, Nair said.

The vehicle is fitted with revised spring rates and antiroll bars, lower ride height, unique track-tuned alignment settings, revised bushings and jounce bumpers, cross-axis ball joints in the front suspension, and revised calibration controlling the MagnaRide dampers.

"The Shelby GT350R Mustang is a car with the nimbleness and power delivery you want on a road course," said Nair.

"This isn't just about horsepower. This is an all-around balanced athlete – one that is extraordinarily precise and agile."

But, Fields said, Ford is only getting started with the Shelby GT350R. The company, he said, is also bringing back the Ford GT supercar.

Beginning production late next year, Fields said, the GT hits the road in select global markets to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Ford GT race cars placing 1-2-3 at the 1966 24 Hours of Le Mans.

"As we at Ford drive innovation into every part of our business, it's worth remembering that our first innovation as a company was not in a laboratory, but on the racetrack," said Fields, referring to Henry Ford's win of a 1901 car race that inspired financial backers to invest in his company.

"We are passionate about innovation through performance and creating vehicles that make people's hearts pound."

The new GT supercar features rear-wheel drive, a mid-mounted engine, and a sleek, aerodynamic, two-door coupe body shell. It is propelled, said Fields, by the most powerful EcoBoost production engine ever – a next-generation twin-turbocharged EcoBoost

V6 producing more than 600 horsepower.

The GT makes extensive use of lightweight materials, including carbon fiber and aluminum – enabling outstanding acceleration and handling with improved efficiency, said Fields.

Ford's commitment to – and capability in delivering – technologies typically offered only in elite vehicles is evident in the GT, Fields said, adding that they include advanced active aerodynamics, such as a deployable rear spoiler, and a host of material and technology innovations to help better serve the driver, such as SYNC 3 – the latest version of Ford's advanced connectivity system.

Raptor 'Built to Live Off Road' – Hinrichs

by Jim Stickford

Ford's F-150 Raptor pickup truck has taken technology from the racetrack and put it in the hands of the public.

"The Raptor was built to live off the road," said Joe Hinrichs, Ford executive vice president and president, The Americas, before the world media at the 2015 NAIAS.

"This is just a neat vehicle that was born on the racetrack. Innovation drives everything we do at Ford. Just look at the new F-150."

Hinrichs said the Raptor is the toughest, smartest and most capable truck Ford has, and it doesn't sacrifice comfort.

The Raptor, Hinrichs said, starts with a purpose-built frame – that is the strongest in the F-150 lineup, featuring more high-strength steel than the outgoing Raptor.

Forged from high-strength, military-grade, aluminum alloy that helps save more than 500 pounds of weight, Raptor's exterior design was inspired, Hinrichs said, by Ford's performance heritage in off-road racing that includes Best in the Desert, Lucas Oil Off-Road Racing Series and the famous Baja 1000.

"The result is one tough truck," he said.

Raptor is powered by Ford's new, second-generation 3.5-liter EcoBoost engine that produces more power with greater efficiency than the current 6.2-liter V8, which is rated at 411 horsepower and 434 lb.-ft. of torque.

The first-generation 3.5-liter EcoBoost, Hinrichs said, proved its mettle off-road – racing in the original F-150 EcoBoost Torture Test truck in the 2010 Baja 1000, as well as notching repeated wins in off-road race series.

The high-output 3.5-liter Eco-



The Ford GT supercar is coming back in 2016.

"The GT is the ultimate execution of an enthusiast supercar," said Nair.

"GT includes innovations and technologies that can be applied broadly across Ford's future product portfolio – another proof point that Ford continues raising the performance bar while ulti-

mately improving vehicles for all of our customers."

The GT, Fields said, is one of more than 12 new Ford Performance vehicles coming by 2020.

It will join Focus RS, F-150 Raptor, Shelby GT350 and Shelby GT350R in the growing Ford Performance lineup.



The Ford F-150 Raptor will bring power to the truck market in 2016.

Boost is a Raptor exclusive in the F-150 lineup.

It will be paired with a new 10-speed transmission for improved efficiency.

A new four-wheel-drive, torque-on-demand transfer case, with an advanced, easier-to-use version of off-road mode driver-assist technology, further improves Raptor's trail performance, said Hinrichs.

Raptor's new transfer case, which manages power distribution between the front and rear wheels, combines the best attributes, said Hinrichs, of clutch-driven, on-demand all-wheel drive with durable, mechanical-locking four-wheel drive.

"The new transfer case offers better traction for a greater variety of terrain at low and high speeds – both on-road and off-road," said Jamal Hameedi, chief engineer in Ford Performance.

Raptor's new off-road mode driving technology has evolved into an all-new Terrain Management System that enables the driver to select modes to optimize driving dynamics to environmental conditions – from snow to mud, sand and more, Hameedi said.

The new Raptor features calibration changes to its powertrain, driveline, traction control, ABS and AdvanceTrac stability control for optimal performance. Six preset modes are available for the truck, depending on terrain and driving conditions:

- Normal mode for everyday driving;
- Street mode for higher-performance, on-road driving;
- Weather mode for rain, snow or ice;
- Mud and sand mode for muddy and sandy trails and terrain;
- Baja mode for high-speed desert running;
- Rock mode for low-speed rock crawling.

The result of all this technology, Hinrichs said, is a smart truck that uses technology from the race track to a very smart effect.

An available Torsen front differential increases off-road capability further, Hinrichs said.

The system increases grip significantly for the front end of the truck and allows it to pull itself over obstacles and up steep grades – even when traction is split between the front tires.

"New transfer case offers better traction. . ."
Jamal Hameedi,
Chief Engineer

Building a high-performance off-road truck isn't just about engine power – more importantly, it's about the suspension, Hinrichs said.

The F-150 Raptor comes standard with new FOX Racing Shox with custom internal bypass technology that works to damp and stiffen suspension travel over rough terrain to help prevent the truck from bottoming out.

Front and rear shock canisters have grown from 2.5 inches to 3 inches in diameter for improved performance.

They feature more suspension travel than the current Raptor's 11.2 inches at the front and 12 inches at the rear offers, Hinrichs said.

Advanced LED lighting and camera technology, said Hinrichs, contribute to improved visibility on the trail or street – day and night.

"This all-new F-150 Raptor takes Raptor performance to the next level," said Dave Pericak, director of Ford Performance.

The Raptor will be built at Dearborn Truck Plant. It goes on sale in the fall of 2016.

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Industry Must Lower Costs of Development

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sion, I've never heard of a turkey that invited himself to Thanksgiving dinner.

"Just look at the happy-go-lucky 1990s when we had mergers that didn't make sense.

"But the industry needs to bring down the cost of development. What I learned when I was younger is that the biggest redundancies in the car business exist at the executive level."

Marchionne also talked about the company's facilities in Mexico and Canada. He said he had no specifics to say about the Mexican plants other than in about 12 months, an announcement would be made what investments the company was making at those facilities.

He also said that Windsor Assembly has received about \$2 billion in investments for the next FCA minivan, which he hopes to see at the 2016 Detroit auto show. And if they decide to build a large SUV, that facility would be the logical place to do it.

"The industry sees 2015 in an optimistic fashion."

— Sergio Marchionne, CEO of FCA

Marchionne also talked a little about the Jeep plant in Toledo. He said the workers there have done a great job for the company and that effort should be acknowledged.

"Regardless of what happens with Jeep, that plant will be kept busy," Marchionne said. "The issue is financial. It comes down to how much would it cost to build the Wrangler there. It isn't a normal production vehicle.

"The way the plant is set up imposes production limitations. We're still working through the details. The problem is the size of the investment. Some people will have to step up to the bar. We're talking about a lot of money."

When asked about the recent drop in oil prices, Marchionne said that shouldn't really have much effect on FCA's plans or its portfolio.

The decisions that really affect what will be made, he added, are based on things like CO2 emissions, which he said that, given upcoming federal regulations, is the thing that wags the dog.

Marchionne added that it's not the price of oil that will affect the U.S. market, it's the value of the dollar.

Because of its relative strength, European and Asian automakers will be "looking at the U.S. market with more affection."

In discussing automotive recalls, Marchionne said there's been a change in the paradigm of how vehicles are recalled and why.

"We need to see this process develop as we go forward," Marchionne said. "That's as far as I'll go on this."

Marchionne concluded by saying that 2015 looks to be a good year for the car business.

"There is no doubt that the industry sees 2015 in an optimistic fashion," Marchionne said.

"The worst case scenario is we see a stable market this year. We're all in good shape and not complacent, which is unusual. But for now I'm saying I'm optimistic for 2015."

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Jeep CEO Manley Answers Future-Marketing Questions

By TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) – Jeep brand CEO Mike Manley has the unenviable goal of nearly doubling sales of the Jeep brand all over the world in the next three years. He’s banking on the rugged SUV brand’s high recognition in Europe, China, Brazil and elsewhere, and some new vehicles in segments where Jeep does not now have entries to meet the goal set by his boss, Fiat Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne. Still, it will be tough to grow from last year’s record sales of just over a million to 1.9 million in 2018. It also will be difficult for Manley to pull off an encore performance of the last five years, which saw sales triple from just 337,000 in 2009.

But Manley, in an interview last week at the Detroit auto show, is confident he has the tools to get the job done. Here are three questions that Manley answered, edited for clarity and length:

Q: Your sales goal is pretty high. How do you accomplish it? Is the majority of the growth in global markets?

A: Since 2009, every single year we have continued to grow much stronger than the industry. And I think we have the opportunity to do that, particularly as Renegade (a subcompact SUV) reaches the U.S. by the end of the first quarter and finishes its global rollout by the end of the first half. Cherokee (midsize SUV) is only in its second full year, so I’m looking for that vehicle to continue to grow. There will be some additions to the portfolio. One of the major parts of the next phase will be the globalization of the industrial footprint. In the major markets of China and Brazil, for example, as a pure importer, we naturally play in a very niche position. Our first

plant will go on line to make the Renegade in Brazil in March. At the end of this year, we will return to local manufacturing in China with Cherokee. We already made the first stage of global manufacturing with the Renegade in Europe. (Chrysler has to pay tariffs in major markets when it imports vehicles. Manufacturing locally makes it more competitive on price.) If we execute well, the 1.9 should be in our sights. The Compass and Patriot compact SUVs are next to get updates in 2016.

Q: Are low gas prices in the U.S. helping Jeep sales?

A: When we were still at \$3.80 per gallon, we were still up 38 percent year over year. We ended the year up 41 percent. So our growth story was happening prior to the lows we’re seeing today. There’s no doubt that gas prices being this low for this long have got to help – even if it’s just helping consumer confidence. I think we all notice it’s a lot less money to fill up your vehicle. That helps with a better sentiment and outlook. Whether you can directly say it’s moving people into SUV segments or not – my gut tells me it is. But whether it is or it isn’t, I have no doubt that it’s going to help at least maintain and continue a strong industry into 2015. **Q:** How is the Jeep brand viewed in Europe or China? Do they know it as tough and rugged?

A: Yes. In all senses, it’s a genuine global brand. It’s really because of what Jeep stands for and its history. Jeep to me is a brand that has a spirit, has a connection with its customers. It’s about experiencing life. It’s about doing more tomorrow than yesterday. The things that Jeep stands for resonate with people. We may have to communicate it in a different way based upon the region.



The Buick Avenir concept car debuted at the 2015 NAIAS show.

Buick Cascada and Avenir Shown to World

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

efficiency. It’s backed by a six-speed automatic transmission. Power from the turbocharged engine is translated into driving enjoyment via the innovative suspension system, which employs the sophisticated HiPer Strut front suspension pioneered on the LaCrosse and Regal. HiPer Strut is based on the MacPherson strut design and features dual-path top mountings that separate the transfer of spring and damper loads to the body structure. Indiveri said it enhances ride and handling – by reducing torque steer – more linear and communicative steering through improved camber control, and improved impact isolation on bumps and rough surfaces.

Built on the Delta II platform, a rigid body structure features high-strength steel in strategic areas, reinforced side sills and press-hardened steel in the A-pillars. It is the foundation for the Cascada’s driving experience, contributing, said Indiveri, to steering precision, ride quality and quietness – as well as safety. A 106.1-inch wheelbase, she said, enhances ride smoothness while enabling greater rear-seat leg room. “This convertible has the same name of its Opel counterpart,” Indiveri said. “It will be made in Poland and we like to think of it as a ‘halo’ vehicle. “A ‘halo’ vehicle is one that is an aspirational vehicle that is elevated above the rest just as a

halo is above your head. The Corvette Stingray is Chevy’s halo vehicle. The idea is to build a good perception of the Buick brand.” Buick also showed off the concept car Avenir, which – loosely translated – is French for future. “The Avenir was designed with the inspiration of the class Riviera in mind,” Indiveri said. “It’s meant to evoke Buick’s classic past while showing the public where the brand can go. “We have no plans to produce an Avenir right now, but Buick and GM will look at the business case for one and if it makes sense, sure.” Indiveri said the response to the Avenir has been positive.



2016 Lincoln MKX

Lincoln MKX to Hit U.S. Showrooms by Fall

“What a difference a year makes.” Those were the words of Ford CEO Mark Fields used at the 2015 NAIAS auto show to describe where the Lincoln brand was. “The proof of this is in our actions, not our words,” Fields said. “Last year, we launched the Lincoln brand in China. The brand had its best sales year since 2008.” And, Fields said, the brand also launched the MKC both here and in China as well. The new Lincoln Navigator was launched in 2014 and it doubled its market-share in the luxury SUV segment. But 2014 was only one year in Lincoln’s journey, Fields said. Granted, it was a year that had Oscar-winning actor Matthew McConaughey become a spokesman for the brand. “I think there should some new kind of metric to measure a commercial’s success based on the number of parodies done of it,” Fields said. He said Lincoln’s growth in the U.S. and China is important because, over the next few years, fully half of all luxury vehicles will be sold in those two countries. But that’s 2014, Fields said. The next chapter of Lincoln features the new MKX. “We are focused on delivering engaging and refined luxury vehicles with innovative and thoughtful technologies,” said Kumar Galhorta, president of Lincoln. “The all-new Lincoln MKX reflects that focus.” He said the MKX is the third of four vehicles that Lincoln prom-

ised to introduce by 2016. The new Lincoln MKX goes on sale first in the United States this fall, followed by other markets that include China, Canada, the Middle East, Mexico and South Korea. The Lincoln MKX, Galhorta said, further strengthens Lincoln’s position in the global mid-size premium utility segment, which represents 11 percent of the global automotive luxury market and is expected to grow to 12 percent by 2018. It is one of the largest luxury segments in the United States, representing about one-quarter of the retail luxury automotive market. Leading the engine choices for the new Lincoln MKX is the available advanced 2.7-liter twin-turbocharged Ti-VCT EcoBoost V6, Galhorta said. It is projected to deliver more than 330 horsepower and more than 370 lb.-ft. of torque, based on preliminary test data. The standard engine, Galhorta said, is a 3.7-liter V6, projected to deliver 300 horsepower and 280 lb.-ft. of torque, based on preliminary test data. Both engines are mated to a six-speed automatic transmission with push-button shift and SelectShift. Front-wheel drive is standard, with Intelligent All-Wheel Drive optional. The addition of the integral link rear suspension, upgrades to the body structure and chassis components make the new model the best-handling, best-riding and quietest Lincoln MKX ever, Galhorta said. Several available technologies,

starting with the 360-degree camera, a first for Lincoln in the MKX, help make all kinds of low-speed parking situations easier, Galhorta said. The available front camera deploys from behind the Lincoln Star badging between the two front grilles. The camera system also offers a 180-degree split view, which can be helpful in looking out in cross-traffic situations. The 360-degree view shows up to 7 feet all around the vehicle. Lincoln MKX has an ultrasonic sensing system with 12 sensors enabling the full range of available parking-assist features: front rear side sensing, perpendicular and parallel parking assist and park out assist. New available 22-way adjustable front seats with active motion help reduce muscle fatigue in the upper legs and lower back through six adjustable air bladders in the cushion and five adjustable air bladders in the lower seat back. Further adjustments can be made through the four-way power head restraint and the power thigh extender. The thigh bolster deflates to make exit easier and reinflates after entry to the previous setting. Always-on, built-in connectivity is provided through an available embedded modem, Galhorta said. Via a smartphone app that communicates with the vehicle, the available MyLincoln Mobile app gives owners the ability to start, lock, unlock and locate their vehicle, as well as schedule a remote start.

Michelin Tires Give Edge

Already recognized for enabling many of the top performing production cars in the world, said tire company spokesman Brian Remsbert, Michelin is once again prominently featured on several high profile world premieres and other recently introduced automobiles during the North American International Auto Show in Detroit. Remsberg said that the following automobiles will exclusively feature Michelin tires that were specifically designed and developed in partnership with their respective manufacturer:

- 2016 BMW X5M and 2016 BMW X6M – Michelin Pilot Super Sport (21-inch only);
- 2016 Cadillac ATS-V – Michelin Pilot Super Sport;
- 2016 Cadillac CTS-V – Michelin Pilot Super Sport;
- 2015 Corvette Z06 – Michelin Pilot Super Sport and Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2;
- Ford GT – Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2;
- 2016 Shelby GT350 Mustang

– Michelin Pilot Super Sport;

- 2016 Ford Shelby GT350R Mustang – Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2.

“Michelin is proud of our collaboration as a preferred technology partner with many of the world’s leading automakers, we have worked very closely with their engineering teams to design and develop tires that maximize the performance of these amazing vehicles,” said Bob Carroll, vice president of North American sales for Michelin. “We like to say that we don’t just sell tires, we sell technology that enables mobility. Every one of these projects was unique with the tires specifically tuned to the vehicle.” These vehicles join a growing list of automobiles exclusively fitted with Michelin tires to help enhance performance, Remsberg said, including: the BMW M3 and M4, Ferrari 458 Speciale, Mercedes Benz SLS AMG Couple Black Series, Porsche 918 Spyder and 911 GT3R.

Chevrolet to Debut Prognostic Technology That Informs Drivers of Potential Issues

Chevrolet is using advanced connected vehicle technology to give customers a sense of assurance in their vehicles.

This new tech will debut later this year, said GM spokesman Stuart Fowle.

This “industry-leading” prognostic technology can predict and notify drivers when certain components need attention – in many cases before vehicle performance is affected, Fowle said.

The predictive technology is initially focused on the battery, starter motor and fuel pump, all critical to starting and keeping a vehicle running, Fowle said.

Additional vehicle parts and components are expected to be added in future model years.

“This is a new chapter in our pursuit to provide customers with convenience and the best overall service in the industry,” said Alicia Boler-Davis, General Motors senior vice president, Global Connected Customer Experience.

“Using our innovative OnStar 4G LTE connectivity platform, we can actively monitor vehicle component health and notify our

customers if covered vehicle components need attention.

“Nobody else in the industry is offering this.”

Building on the 15-year history of connected vehicle technology through OnStar, the prognostic service relies on OnStar 4G LTE to provide data streams from sensors within the vehicle, Boler-Davis said.

When customers have enrolled their properly equipped vehicle in this service, the data is sent to OnStar’s secure servers and proprietary algorithms are applied to assess whether certain conditions could impact vehicle performance.

When indicated, notifications are sent to the customer via email, text message, in-vehicle alerts or through the OnStar RemoteLink smartphone app.

This service is expected to be available on select 2016 Chevrolet Equinox, Tahoe, Suburban, Corvette, Silverado and Silverado HD models equipped with certain powertrains.

More Chevrolet vehicles will follow with this service throughout the 2016 model year, Fowle said.

Prognostic capability is the latest advancement in a suite of services that will keep Chevrolet customers informed from the first day of ownership through many years into the future, said Fowle.

Chevrolet customers with an active OnStar connection already can monitor tire pressure, oil life and other key data points via the OnStar RemoteLink smartphone app or through a monthly diagnostic email sent from the vehicle.

In 2016, Chevrolet is adding a new capability, which allows customers to check these key data points continuously, without having to wait for their monthly email, Fowle said.

Keeping a vehicle’s tires filled to the recommended pressure and keeping vital systems well-maintained can lower fuel costs and extend a vehicle’s life, he said.

Together, said Boler-Davis, Chevrolet’s advanced diagnostic and prognostic capabilities will keep owners more informed and empowered to make every trip confidently through years of ownership.

Tesla CEO Predicts Profit with New Model

By DEE-ANN DURBIN and TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writers

DETROIT (AP) – The head of electric car maker Tesla Motors says the company should turn a profit in five years after it brings a lower-cost car to market.

CEO Elon Musk, speaking Jan. 13 at an automotive conference, said Tesla needs to show a profit, and will when it’s selling 500,000 cars per year. He predicted that sales milestone will be reached in 2020, when its lower-cost car – the Model 3 – is in full production.

Tesla, which was founded in 2003, has never made a full-year profit. The company based in Palo Alto, Calif., expects to sell around 33,000 Model S sedans this year.

Speaking at the *Automotive News* World Congress, Musk said Tesla could make money under U.S. accounting standards “if we weren’t growing and investing great amounts of money.”

In addition to developing the Model 3 and a crossover, Tesla recently reengineered its Model S sedan to offer all-wheel drive. It’s also building a \$5 billion battery factory in Nevada that is set to begin production in 2017.

Musk wouldn’t say how many Model S sedans Tesla sold last year, citing its upcoming earnings report.

He did say fourth-quarter sales fell in China because of customers’ concerns about plugging

in their vehicles if they live in apartment buildings.

Musk said that issue is being resolved as Tesla expands its network of supercharging stations in China.

He added that North America and Europe saw a “significant increase” in sales.

In addition to the Model 3 – which, at \$35,000, would cost half the price of a Model S – Tesla is developing the Model X SUV, which is set to go on sale this summer after several delays.

Musk said technical difficulties with the crossover’s unique rear doors, which open up instead of out, were the reason.

“I do have an issue with punctuality,” Musk joked. “This car is really good. And I do not say these things lightly.”

He said he wasn’t concerned about competitors, including the Chevrolet Bolt, a \$37,500 electric car with a 200-mile range that was introduced this week at the Detroit auto show.

General Motors says the Bolt could be on sale by 2017.

“I don’t see it as a competitive threat because I think all cars will go electric,” he said. “It’s not going to affect us, really.”

Musk said he wishes more automakers would take a risk on electric cars.

Low gas prices, he said, shouldn’t hinder their adoption because electric cars are cheaper to run than gas-powered cars

Google Talks Cars at NAIAS

Chris Urmson, director of self-driving cars at Google, said Jan. 14 at the *Automotive News* World Congress that the technology giant has started talks with most of the world’s top automakers and assembled a team of global suppliers to speed its push to bring self-driving cars to market.

The suppliers named by Google included Bosch, which supplies power electronics and long-range radar to Google; ZF Lenksysteme, which supplies a new steering gear; LG Electronics, which supplies the batteries; plus Continental and Roush.

Urmson confirmed that Roush, the Michigan-based engineering and specialty manufacturing company, built the podlike two-seater that Google plans to start testing on public roads this year. *Crain’s Detroit Business*, an affili-

ate of *Automotive News*, reported that relationship last May.

Google didn’t ask a large automaker to build this car, Urmson said during a discussion with *Automotive News* publisher and Editor Jason Stein, but intends to do so in the future when it seeks to commercialize its technology.

“At some point, we’re going to be looking to find partners to build complete vehicles, and bring the technology to market,” he said.

Asked when that might be, he said, “When it’s safe and ready.”

Urmson was among more than 20 industry leaders to address the sold-out group of more than 1,200 attendees. Other speakers included Mary Barra; Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla Motors; Sergio Marchionne; and Joe Hinrichs, president – The Americas, Ford.

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Bolt EV Concept is 'Game-Changer' – Barra

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

industry-leading battery and drive-unit technologies, we've delivered all of that, while also making the Volt more refined and fun to drive."

Practically every element and component of the Voltec system – which includes the battery, drive unit, range-extending engine and power electronics – is new or improved, said Farah. The Volt's greater EV range and new range-extender result in a quieter driving experience.

"Volt remains the only electrically driven vehicle with range capability similar to traditional engine- or hybrid-driven cars of its size," said Farah.

"In all climates, it can be driven across town strictly on electricity or across the country with the assist of its range extender –

a claim that can be made of no other electric vehicle without condition."

GM also showed off a concept car – the Bolt – at the auto show. This vehicle, which Reuss said was well on its way to production, is a fully electric vehicle that goes a long way toward fulfilling GM's vision for an affordable, long-range all-electric vehicle designed to offer more than 200 miles of range starting around \$30,000.

"The Bolt EV concept is a game-changing electric vehicle designed for attainability, not exclusivity," said General Motors CEO Mary Barra. "Chevrolet believes electrification is a pillar of future transportation and needs to be affordable for a wider segment of customers."

Leveraging the electrification prowess established by Volt and

Spark EV, the Bolt EV concept is designed to offer long-range performance in all 50 states and many global markets, Barra said.

Drivers will be able to select operating modes designed around preferred driving styles such as daily commuting and spirited weekend cruising, for uncompromising electric driving. The modes adjust accelerator pedal mapping, vehicle ride height and suspension tuning. The Bolt EV concept is also designed to support DC fast charging.

"We have made tremendous strides in technologies that make it easier and more affordable for Chevrolet customers to integrate an all-electric vehicle in their daily lives," said Barra. "The Bolt EV concept demonstrates General Motors' commitment to electrification and the capabilities of our advanced EV technology."

"We're doing what our customers are asking us to do," Reuss said. "The Bolt has greater range for less money. I think it will be a lot of fun for people who drive it. And that's important because we're a for-profit business and we have to take a long-term view concerning mileage and CO2 standards for our fleet."

GM invited several Volt customers to speak to the media about the Volt ownership experience.

John Monsour of Clinton Township, a husband and father of two children has owned a Volt since June of 2014. Since then, he's only had to fill up the car "exactly three times."

"People are always asking me what kind of gas mileage I get with my Volt," Monsour said. "I tell them that, according to the computer, I'm getting about 165 miles to the gallon."

"They then ask me what I'm spending on electricity to charge the car. I am only spending about \$30 a month to charge the vehicle. It even tells me what the best hours are to charge to save money. It's between 1 and 4 a.m."

"So, the charge automatically charges, when plugged in, during those hours. It's a really good car and I'm glad I bought it."

Chinese Market Sees Slowing of Automobile Sales

BEIJING (AP) – Growth in auto sales in China, the biggest market by number of vehicles sold, slowed last year but reached 19.7 million vehicles as domestic brands lost more market share to foreign competitors.

Sales of passenger vehicles for the full year rose 9.9 percent, down 5.8 percentage points from 2013, an industry group, the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, reported Jan. 12.

Global automakers are looking to China to drive sales despite declining growth rates as Beijing tries to steer the world's second-largest economy to more self-sustaining expansion and away from reliance on trade and investment.

Automakers are investing heavily in trying to appeal to Chinese tastes.

Global brands have responded to slowing sales growth in major cities by stepping up efforts to sell in towns and the countryside.

Sales in December rose 16 percent over a year earlier to a monthly record of 2.06 million vehicles, according to CAAM.

Total vehicle sales, including trucks and buses, rose 6.9 percent to 23.5 million vehicles, the group said. China's fledgling domestic auto brands were battered by foreign competition.

Full-year sales of sedans by Chinese manufacturers slumped 17.4 percent, CAAM reported.

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Chinese Carmakers Want to Enter U.S., But Face Hurdles

by DAVID RUNK
Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) – Another Chinese automaker is showing vehicles this year at the auto show in Detroit, raising the perennial question about when these companies might sell in the United States.

The answer: Years from now, according to carmakers and industry observers alike.

Chinese manufacturers have announced plans over the past decade to export to the U.S. only to postpone them when faced with passing U.S. safety and emissions tests and building a dealer network. They also must overcome big hurdles in convincing U.S. car buyers that Chinese cars have the quality they demand. Still, Chinese companies remain interested in eventually selling in the prestigious – and potentially profitable – market.

“The fact that they’re showing in Detroit doesn’t really signify that they’re coming soon,” said Michael Robinet, managing director of IHS’s automotive group. “They’re showcasing that they’re in the game, looking to expand beyond the home market.”

Any Chinese-made cars sold in the U.S. likely would come in at the bottom segment of the market for different types of vehicles, Robinet said, where they would compete in the already lively market for used cars. Buyers would need to decide whether it’s better to buy a used car made by General Motors or Toyota, for example, or a new car from a company that just arrived on American shores.

John Humphrey, senior vice president of global automotive operations at J.D. Power and As-

sociates, said the quality of Chinese-built vehicles has improved, but they still generally lack the fit-and-finish that U.S. car buyers expect. And consumers’ experience with waves of Chinese-made products that they encounter daily at stores would color their expectations about new cars.

“There’s a general perception of goods coming out of China, being fair or unfair, that they are relatively sub-par,” Humphrey said.

The Chinese automakers basically compete on price, and in the past several years have started to upgrade their design,” said Yale Zhang, managing director of Automotive Foresight, a research firm in Shanghai.

Quality has improved but “it’s not there yet to enter mature markets like Western Europe and the U.S.,” Zhang said. In the U.S., challenges include setting up distribution in an unfamiliar market in which local laws prohibit direct sales to customers, Zhang said.

Chinese companies are in their first decade displaying vehicles at the North American International Auto Show. In 2006, a lone Geely Automobile sedan sitting outside the main exhibit halls marked the first time a Chinese automaker showed a car in Detroit. Last year, the Chinese companies skipped Detroit.

This year, Guangzhou Automobile is showing vehicles including a fuel-efficient small SUV that will be sold in China starting in April and parts of the Middle East, Africa, South America and eastern Europe in late 2015.

The company, GAC, said 2017 is a possible year it would like to enter the U.S. market.



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State, Feds, Colleges, Firms Team for Better Materials

DETROIT (AP) – A new partnership that will research and create lighter and stronger manufacturing materials will be a boost to Michigan’s economy and the auto industry, officials said Jan. 13.

President Barack Obama in early January announced that the \$259 million Institute for Advanced Composites Manufacturing Innovation, which will be anchored by the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and will include 122 public and private partners, including some from Michigan, will team to make lighter and stronger manufacturing materials for things like fuel-efficient cars or wind turbine blades.

The effort is backed in part by a \$70 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, and Michigan has made a \$15 million commitment to support the hub’s activities in Michigan over the next five years. Other partners are providing the rest of the funding.

“This award has huge implications on the future of the industry and will help smaller companies who need access technology or a place to test innovative ideas,” said Lt. Gov. Brian Calley at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

As part of the effort, lab space

is expected to be used in Detroit. Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, Midland-based Dow Chemical Co. and Dearborn-based Ford Motor Co. are among those involved in the Advanced Composites hub.

It joins other manufacturing hubs designated for Detroit; Youngstown, Ohio; Raleigh, N.C.; and Chicago.

On Jan. 15, a ribbon-cutting is planned at the earlier-announced \$148 million American Lightweight Materials Manufacturing Innovation Institute in Detroit. The research program is expected to help move cutting-edge metals from research into vehicles, planes and ships used commercially and by the U.S. military.

Meanwhile, Calley on Jan. 13 also joined officials in announcing the creation of the Michigan Design Council, which is intended to help grow Michigan’s pool of design professionals.

Details are in the works, but plans call for the creation of an annual statewide product design prize and a district in Detroit where design work would be encouraged. A similar design enterprise zone could be organized in Grand Rapids to promote the design industry.

Ford’s Trend Report: ‘Make Way for Gen Z’

Ford Motor Company’s third annual trend report suggests 2015 will be marked by a broad desire to enact change for the good.

“Looking Further with Ford 2015” reveals data and insights about global consumer habits and behaviors expected to shape culture in 2015 and beyond.

One of the featured trends commented on in the report is “Make Way for Gen Z.”

Generation Z, which follows the Millennials, is the first truly global generation, born into an on-demand, technology-driven culture.

Expected to account for more than 20 percent of the world’s population, these digitally savvy, socially conscious consumers, most of whom are still teenagers, are working to help define the trends of both today and tomorrow, said Ford spokeswoman Marisa Bradley.

“While demographics are invariably a factor in futuring work,” said Sheryl Connelly, Ford global consumer trend and futuring manager, “what’s driving our report for 2015 is this emerging Generation Z consumer, who is already inspiring attitudes and behaviors in consumers of all ages.

“We saw similar traits with Millennials, but Gen Z consumers –

being much more connected and aware of the options available to them – are the global go-getters who have a link to each of our micro-trends for 2015.”

Despite looming issues such as climate change, privacy threats, epidemic disease and geopolitical strife – there is optimism in the air, Connelly said.

Against this backdrop, “Looking Further with Ford 2015” highlights the modern-day rebel working to buck convention and set new standards, as well as people who are more motivated than ever to take risks in their search for success, which is beginning to erode the stigma of failure, Connelly said.

“Gen Z consumers are the global go-getters.”
Sheryl Connelly, Ford Trends

“In this spirit of determination, new forms of collaborative consumption and mobility are emerging – giving us more freedom to pursue ideas and passions,” Connelly said.

In preparing trend reports, said Bradley, Ford experts monitor shifts in social, technological, economic, environmental and political arenas to understand what drives consumer attitudes and behaviors – and how this impacts the automotive category.

The insights gathered will guide Ford designers and engineers in developing future Ford products.

Ford marketers will also use this information to help anticipate in terms of the customer shopping and ownership experience of emerging generations, Bradley said.

“Looking Further with Ford 2015” focuses on a broad range of micro-trends affecting businesses and consumers, and reflects years of qualitative and quantitative research, as well as collaboration with thought leaders around the world.

“A rich understanding of our customers’ ever-evolving needs, priorities and desires – both today and tomorrow – is key to our everyday business and global product development strategies,” said Connelly.

“These trends and insights help us at Ford in our role as an innovator to create products that not only exceed expectations, but push the boundaries of imagination.”

As the Generation Z consumer evolves, Ford is looking at how these behaviors and trends will affect every part of the automotive business – from vehicle development to the experience customers will expect when the time comes to purchase or own a vehicle, Connelly said.

Some of the trends Ford expects to influence consumers and brands in 2015 and beyond include:

- Make Way for Gen Z: With considerable pressure and high expectations, Gen Z’s mantra is simple: “Good things come to those who act.”
- Rally for Renegades and Rebels: Society has always loved risk-takers, but the marketplace has never been more receptive to those who push boundaries and break molds.
- Flaunting Failure: The stigma of failure is quickly eroding; in an era of constant change, the only true failure is a failure to try, to improve, to evolve.
- Carryless Movement: Today’s consumers don’t want to carry things and, increasingly, don’t need to. New technologies such as wearable gadgets and smartphone apps are transforming the mechanics of how consumers pay for goods and services, how and where marketers reach their customers, and who people trust with their most valuable information.
- No Strings Attached: In a world where innovation moves so rapidly, no one wants to be left behind with a product that has become outdated or obsolete. The result is an emerging a la carte mentality that trumpets access over ownership.
- Expanding Next of Kin: As traditional families and communities become less the norm, the concept of family is adapting, expanding and evolving in a most personal fashion.

California Sheriffs Patrol Highways in 2015 Tahoes

There’s tough and then there’s police vehicle tough.

That’s what Ed Peper, GM Fleet & Commercial U.S. vice president, said when the county of Ventura (Calif.) took delivery of a fleet of 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe PPVs.

The Tahoe fleet soon will be used by the county sheriff’s department while on patrol.

The department received the vehicles on Dec. 18, said GM spokesman Robert Wheeler.

Once the existing Ford Crown Victorias and Dodge Chargers are phased out, Wheeler said, the County of Ventura’s patrol fleet will comprise solely Chevrolet Tahoe PPVs.

“The safety and ergonomics of the 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe PPV are the key reasons for the sheriff’s department and our fleet operations team choosing this vehicle to replace their current patrol vehicles,” said Peter Bednar, County of Ventura Fleet Operations manager.

“The visibility from the vehicle allows deputies to better spot incidents and react faster.”

For the first time, the Tahoe PPV is offered with 4-wheel-drive capability. Tahoe PPV remains the only full-size, body-on-frame truck-based product on the mar-

ket, said GM spokesman Robert Wheeler.

More than 6,500 Tahoe PPVs have been ordered since March when the vehicle was made available to police agencies and fleets.

“The Tahoe PPV & SSV continues to be GM Fleet and Commercial’s most-popular selling police vehicle,” said Peper. “The all-new Tahoe strengthens GM’s police portfolio and commitment to the law enforcement market.”

Although more municipalities are selecting Tahoes due to their low cost of ownership and high resale value, Wheeler said, Chevrolet also offers the most comprehensive police lineup in the market.

And, Wheeler said, the Chevrolet Caprice PPV, a purpose-built police duty vehicle that delivers best-in-class top speed and 0-60 acceleration of just over six seconds, and the Chevrolet Impala Limited Police sedan give police fleet owners options when it comes to choosing a vehicle.

New for 2015 is the Chevrolet Silverado 1500 Crew Cab Special Service Vehicle (SSV), said Wheeler, offering the same capabilities and durability as the award-winning Silverado 1500, with special features designed for police use.

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GM's Reuss: CTS-V Goal is to Not Compete – 'It's to Win'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ble of 0-60 performance in 3.7 seconds, de Nysschen said.

Track-honed design, chassis and suspension elements complement the supercharged powertrain and elevate CTS-V's capability, performance and driver control to new thresholds, while enabling track driving without modifications or special procedures, de Nysschen said.

According to a Cadillac press release, key performance technologies include:

- Standard carbon fiber hood and available carbon fiber vent, front splitter, rear spoiler and rear diffuser for greater aerodynamic performance.

- Brembo high-performance brake system developed to provide durability, consistency and the capability for track-day performance straight from the factory.

- Third-generation Magnetic Ride Control delivering 40 percent faster damping response.

- Integrated chassis controls that provide balanced performance for touring and the track, including competition-spec Performance Traction Management.

- Structural stiffness increased by 25 percent for improved ride and superior handling.

- Driver-selectable modes that electronically calibrate performance variables for touring, sport and track driving conditions.

- Michelin Pilot Super Sport tires with tri-compound

technology offering excellent grip with extended wear.

- An interior with performance-oriented, sueded microfiber accents and matte-finish carbon fiber trim and available RECARO high-performance seats for spirited driving.

- Advanced safety and parking technologies, including a front curb-view camera system that provides a visual cue of curbs to protect the front splitter; automatic parking assist to find and steer into parallel or perpendicular parking spots; side blind zone alert; forward collision alert; lane keep assist, and rear cross-traffic alert.

Mark Reuss, GM vice president for Global Development, said he got to drive the CTS-V a few times in the development stage and "it's great to see it out in the real world without any camouflage."

"Driving any car at 200 mph is incredible," Reuss said. "It means you're approaching the limits of what a production car can do. Very few vehicles achieve that kind of speed. And it's hard to design such a vehicle and still have it be comfortable to drive for everyday use."

People, Reuss said, have been asking him why GM designed the CTS-V with a V8 engine when they have a great V6 that could go in the CTS-V.

"I tell them that we're not leaving anything on the table. Besides, Cadillac basically invented the V8. The goal of this car is not to compete with BMW and Mercedes – it's to win."

Lower Gas Prices Tempting Buyers to Move Up to SUVs

by JEFF KAROUB
AP Business Writer

DETROIT (AP) – Inside the auto show here, automakers are showing off electric and other vehicles designed to cut our dependence on fossil fuels. Outside, car buyers are paying the lowest prices in years for carbon-based fuels.

That dichotomy has the industry scrambling to sell alternative vehicles and buyers making choices that seemed impractical just a short time ago.

Some of the cars that will tease visitors to the North American International Auto Show include a new all-electric Chevrolet Bolt, hybrid and plug-in versions of the Hyundai Sonata, and other vehicles aimed at easing pain at the fuel pump.

But cheap gas prices across the country, driven by a surprising plunge in oil prices, are tempting potential buyers away from the small and economical and toward comparatively more gas-guzzling trucks and SUVs. That's leading automakers to take the long view, adjust production and hope big research and development bets still pay off on better mileage to meet stricter government emissions standards. They also want to appeal to consumers, who once were anxious about high gas prices.

The plummeting pump prices – now pegged by AAA at \$2.13 per gallon on average as of Jan. 12, compared with \$3.31 a year ago – have had an "immediate impact on consumer psyche," according to Edmunds.com senior analyst Jessica Caldwell. According to the car-shopping site, SUVs and pickups outsold cars in 2014 for the first time in a decade. It helps that SUVs are now built on car rather than truck platforms and have vastly improved fuel efficiency

compared with their forebears.

"People want to buy these cars and low gas prices give them the justification they need to do so," Caldwell said.

High gas prices and stricter fuel-economy rules forced the industry to improve existing gas-powered engines and to develop new vehicles that relied less – or not at all – on carbon for power. Hybrids came to prominence at the turn of the millennium with the Toyota Prius. But last year, sales of Prius models dropped 11.5 percent, compared with the previous year.

It's tough to predict a turnaround. The lower gas goes, the longer it will take to make the purchase pay off for a higher-priced, better-mileage Prius instead of, say, a Corolla.

The Prius costs approximately \$4,300 more than a comparable gas-powered vehicle. Back in July, when gas was around \$3.60 a gallon, a Prius buyer could expect it to take about 8 years to recoup the extra cost in the form of gasoline savings. At current prices, the payback doesn't come for nearly 14 years.

Still, not all small cars have suffered. Caldwell says falling gas prices have given first-time buyers and others more comfort and confidence to buy a new car. Sales of the redesigned Honda Fit subcompact were up 40 percent in December, for example, while sales of the Nissan Sentra small car rose about 43 percent.

Alec Gutierrez, a senior market analyst for Kelley Blue Book, said temporarily cheap gas isn't enough to convince buyers to make extreme moves, like trading in a subcompact for a large SUV. But low prices are prompting buyers to kick the tires of something a little larger. People shopping for a small SUV like the Toyota RAV4 are now also considering the larger Toyota Highlander, for example.




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