

Ford's New Air Bag in Focus

By Stefanie Carano
Staff Reporter

No matter how small or how tall, passengers in the 2012 Ford Focus can feel secure in the fact that the car is designed to keep its passengers fully protected in the case of a crash.

At its Product Development Center last week, Ford Motor Co. revealed exclusive air bags that will be standard for the redesigned 2012 Focus set to come out next year.

The car features a new canopy, side airbags and driver-front airbags that provide improved protection for front seat occupants.

Resembling a puckered pillow, the driver-seat air bag is what Ford calls its next-generation air bag with enhanced crash protection technology.

"This is a technology that will allow us to limit and reduce the chest loads on the occupant and we do that through an internal tethering system. So, inside the bag there's some tethers that will restrict how far that air bag can come out and will create a little pocket right here in the chest that will help redistribute the loads on the chest, keeping them lower, having less chest deflection, less rib injuries," said Matt Niesluchowski, Ford safety manager for Ford of Europe.

Niesluchowski said the tethering system was designed in-house by Ford engineers.

Like a safety blanket, the vehicle's canopy curtain provides protection for rollover events in addition to side impact crashes.

"It'll stay inflated for up to

six seconds, so if you're in a rollover, the event tends to be longer and it'll keep that bag in place," said Niesluchowski. "It'll also provide head protection for side impacts."

The side air bag for the Fo-

cus is a dual chamber air bag with a lower chamber to cover the pelvis and an upper chamber to cover the thorax and ribs.

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Ford recently demonstrated the new driver's side airbag that will be available standard in the 2012 Focus, with enhanced crash protection technology.

Thousands of Ford Employees Head to Warren for JDRF Walk

By Christine Snyder
Staff Reporter

A walk to reflect and a new car to look forward to — those are the bases of this year's Juvenile Diabetes Research Fund's (JDRF) Walk to Cure Diabetes taking place at the GM Tech Center in Warren on Sunday, Sept. 26.

This is the 27th year GM has hosted the Warren Walk at its Tech Center.

"GM is a past participant and a wonderful host," said Jim Slaughter, executive director, JDRF, in Southfield.

It is a multi-automotive effort with Ford Motor Company as JDRF's largest and only global partner.

Ford is expected to raise \$500,000 of the targeted \$1 million for the event. A big part of Ford's fundraising endeavors includes raffle tickets to win its new Ford Fiesta.

The JDRF walks are the culmination of fundraising efforts that last anywhere from months to the entire year.

"Some of our (corporate) teams don't stop (raising money), they keep going all year," said Gael Sanoval, the manager of the Ford Global Walk Team.

Sanoval said Ford's official kickoff was in June. Ford teams raise money in a variety of ways, from "jeans' day," where employees pay to wear jeans to work, to golf outings.

Raffle tickets will be sold before, during and after the walk for \$10 or three for \$20. The winner of the Fiesta will be drawn on Sept. 28.

Don't care for the color of the display Fiesta? No worries, said Sanoval.

"We have a good relationship with the dealers, so if you don't want a lime green Fiesta, you can get another one of equal value," said Sanoval.

The Warren Walk is held in conjunction with a similar

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Changes Are Happening At The Henry

By Stefanie Carano
Staff Reporter

The former Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Dearborn, now known as The Henry, will soon be undergoing some changes to its interior look.

The Henry was purchased in early June by Greenwood Hospitality Group, which is operating as a franchise of Marriott's Autograph Collection — a new brand that Marriott is launching consisting of independent, upscale hotels.

"They're very unique, distinctive hotels," said Alan Osborne, director of sales and marketing for The Henry. "So they thought this would work out perfectly for them."

Osborne said The Henry is now in the beginning stages of becoming a more independent hotel.

Changes to the public

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PHOTO: STEFANIE CARANO

Ford's Frank Davis, executive director of North American product, stands with the 2011 Ford Explorer at an event honoring the automakers at Freudenberg-NOK.

'We've Redone Every Vehicle in Our Lineup,' Says Ford's Frank Davis

By Stefanie Carano
Staff Reporter

Last week, the Detroit automakers were honored in a celebration hosted by supplier Freudenberg-NOK, and one Ford executive talked about a completely revamped lineup of vehicles.

The company invited all three Detroit automakers to their Automotive Group location in Plymouth to talk about what's hot in their product lineup right now and what the customer can expect going

forward. The event was broadcast live on WJR's "The Mitch Albom Show."

Here, guests could view the Ford Fiesta, Ford Explorer, Chevy Volt, Dodge Challenger and Jeep Grand Cherokee, Ford Fiesta and Ford Explorer, among other vehicles and meet with company representatives to talk about the cars.

Ford Motor Company's Frank Davis, executive director of North American product, discussed the newness and success of Ford's offerings.

"We've redone every vehicle in our lineup in three years. We went after the F-series, we introduced the Flex, we did the MKX, we moved right onto Mustang, the Fusion, new Fiesta, we've got a new Focus coming and an all-new Explorer, F-150, Edge and the Flex," Davis said. "So, we're really excited."

He said when it comes to Ford, everything is selling.

"We're up double digits across the board," Davis said.

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Ford Volunteers Helping World-Wide

The Ford Volunteer Corps is making a world of difference during the 5th annual Ford Global Week of Caring Sept. 4-11.

More than 8,000 Ford employee and retiree volunteers are registered for projects in more than 25 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Thousands more are expected to join the effort.

In the United States, community building is this year's theme with projects that address shelter and housing issues. Around the world, Ford volunteers are working to create a better world by feeding the hungry, renovating schools, repairing shelters, protecting critical water resources and planting trees.

In all, Ford volunteers are tackling more than 150 projects during this one special week of community service, including:

More than 1,000 volunteers in India will perform community service at libraries and schools

Hunger relief and home building are among more than a dozen projects in Argentina and Brazil

Painting a school for disabled children and landscaping a mental health facility in

the U.K.

Putting up portable buildings to aid disadvantaged families in Australia

Working at nature reserves

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Ford Chairman William Clay Ford, Jr. does his part during Ford's Global Week of Caring. More than 8,000 Ford employees and retiree volunteers registered for projects in more than 25 countries.

Ford Puts 20K People in F-150

Ford will put some 20,000 people behind the wheel of the new 2011 Ford F-150 months before the vehicle arrives in dealer showrooms so they can see for themselves how its all-new powertrain lineup — including the much anticipated 3.5-liter EcoBoost — performs and how F-150 stacks up against the competition.

The Built Ford Tough Round-Up, a comprehensive drive program for consumers, fleet customers and dealership sales staff, will travel to seven cities throughout the country between now and November. Additionally, Ford will offer drives of its full car and truck lineup to fair goers at the State Fair of Texas in Dallas next month.

"We know that once people get into the 2011 F-150 and experience the four new engines that they're really going to be sold on them," said Mark Grueber, F-150 marketing manager.

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Largest Lithium-Ion Battery Plant Opening

By Stefanie Carano
Staff Reporter

Last week, A123 Systems opened the nation's largest lithium-ion automotive battery production facility at its Livonia location.

The plant, which is just one of a handful of battery cell manufacturers within the United States, is expected to help in the creation of a U.S. battery manufacturing industry.

"We think it's a start and we do think it's sustainable long-term," said Jason Forcier, vice president and group manager of A123's automotive solutions group.

Forcier said technology is the key to keeping U.S. battery manufacturing cost competitive.

"The technology is there and in the pipeline to bring the cost down by half over the next three to five years so that's what we've been doing in our research labs that's coming to fruition now," he

said. "The next generation technology will drive the price down in half and that's coming to the forefront now."

A123 CEO David Vieau said that as of 2002, 99 percent of all advanced lithium-ion batteries were made outside of the United States, which didn't have an advanced lithium-ion battery industry and the plant now represents the beginning of attacking the problems of dependency on foreign oil while also capturing a growing and significant market that provides jobs for American people.

Over the past year, A123 has received significant funding from a number of sources that contributed to the opening of the plant, including the U.S. Department of Energy by way of the Recovery Act and the U.S. Army's Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center.

"The U.S. Department of Energy has shown faith and confidence in this small company," Vieau said.



PHOTO: STEFANIE CARANO

A123's Glynn Townsend, left, and GM's Ralf Nickel attend the grand opening of the largest lithium-ion automotive battery production plant in North America at A123's facility in Livonia.

U.S. DOE Secretary Andy Chu said clean energy is the greatest untapped opportunity of our time when it comes to domestic manufacturing.

"Under no circumstances should the United States seed

manufacturing, especially high-tech manufacturing, to any other country in the world," Chu said.

He said batteries will play a

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Special Ford E-Series Van Commemorates 50 Years

Ford E-Series, America's best-selling full-size van for 31 straight years, marks 50 years of meeting customer needs with production of the 2011 model, enhanced with state-of-the-art technologies at Ford's Ohio Assembly Plant in Avon Lake.

E-Series, synonymous with capability and reliability since

its debut in 1961, will offer a commemorative 50th anniversary edition, available as an XLT model, the van's premium package.

The anniversary edition features unique blue metallic exterior paint, specially embroidered "Econoline" front

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The original 1961 Ford Econoline van, above, launched the E-Series truck segment for the carmaker. E-Series debuted as the Econoline 50 years ago. A 50th Anniversary truck is pending.