

Fiesta Leads NAIAS 'Car of the Year' List

Ford's hot little Fiesta passenger car just got a little hotter – it was announced last week that the vehicle made the "short list" of finalists for the 2011 North American Car of the Year award at the Detroit auto show.

In fact, Ford came away with four entries in two categories: Fiesta for Car of the Year and Ford Edge, Ford Explorer and Lincoln MKX all on the Truck of the Year category's short list.

Theoretically, Ford could even repeat its 2010 "sweep" of Detroit auto show awards when the Ford Fusion Hybrid won Car of the Year and Ford Transit Connect won Truck of the Year back in January at Cobo Center in Detroit.

The awards are described as unique in the United States because – instead of being given out by a single media outlet – they are awarded by automotive journalists from the U.S. and Canada who col-

lectively represent print magazines, television, radio, newspapers and Web sites.

Twenty-seven new cars were originally eligible for the 2011 North American Car of the Year Award.

Earlier last week, jurors voted on those they thought deserved additional consideration or what is known as the "short list."

That narrowed the field to 14 semi-finalist cars, which will be on the last ballot in December.

Following Ford with its four entries, General Motors and Nissan each have three such models on the short list. There are four European models, four domestic and four from Japan. Two are from Korea.

The jurors did not vote early on the trucks because there were only 14 to begin with and it did not seem necessary to narrow the field from that original list this time around,

organizers said.

Meanwhile, the three car and three truck finalists will be announced on Dec. 16 at an Automotive Press Assn. (APA) luncheon in Detroit.

And then the final two winners – a North American Car of the Year and a North American Truck of the Year – will be announced in January at the 2011 North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

The 2011 North American Car of the Year short list finalists, in alphabetical order, are as follows:

- Audi A8
- Buick Regal
- Chevrolet Cruze
- Chevrolet Volt
- Ford Fiesta
- Hyundai Sonata / 2.0T / Hybrid;
- Infiniti M37/56
- Jaguar XJ
- Kia Optima
- Mazda Mazda2
- Nissan Juke

And the 2011 North American Truck of the Year short list finalists, in alphabetical order, are as follows:

- Dodge Durango
- Ford Edge
- Ford Explorer
- Hyundai Odyssey
- Hyundai Tucson
- Infiniti QX56
- Jeep Grand Cherokee
- Kia Sorento
- Kia Sportage
- Lincoln MKX
- Mercedes-Benz R Class
- Porsche Cayenne
- Toyota Sienna

This is the 18th year of this set of awards, traditionally announced as the first event at the Detroit auto show's first press morning. Domestic automakers have won North American Car of the Year nine times. European automakers have won four times, the Japanese three, Korea once.

Logistics Supplier Derby Polishes Up Public Image

LOUISVILLE, Ky. – Derby Industries announced last week that it's powering up its brand image. The Third Party Logistics company is now known as Derby Supply Chain Solutions, supported by a new logo, new positioning statement and a newly designed Web site featuring greater customer accessibility.

"We felt the new brand emphasizes the benefits we offer," said company President Diane Herold. "Our clients know us as Derby, but 'supply chain solutions' makes it clear what we do best. We analyze the entire manufacturing process – from assembly to shipping – and devise affordable, customized solutions to make the whole process more efficient and affordable."

The company has long been a proven supply chain partner with many of the country's most respected manufacturers. Industry leaders in appliances, automotive, food and confection, health and beauty, electronics and medical equipment depend on Derby to streamline their production process.

The result is increased manufacturing support, enhanced quality control, greater reliability and significantly lower per-unit costs. Derby's new positioning statement – "Depend On Us" – grew out of this partnership with so many long-standing clients.

Bill O'Bryan, director of sales and marketing explains, "We build value for our clients based on their assembly, packaging, warehousing or distribution procedures. Then we devise systems that meet our clients' needs, with any combination of these four core competencies."

Derby Supply Chain Solutions operates multi-functional facilities in Allentown, Penn., Cleveland, Tenn., Columbus, Ohio, Galesburg, Ill. and Louisville, Ky. Derby also offers on-site "enclave" operations within a client's own manufacturing or distribution plant.

Locations are designed to provide convenient access to various modes of transportation, which improves speed to market worldwide.

Another major component of the new branding strategy was the new Derby website. The site was designed by Louisville-based DBS Interactive, with enhanced services for OEMs.

"It all comes down to continually improving client services," said Derby Strategy and Marketing Director John Greenup.

"We may offer a new look and stronger brand identity, but our commitment to providing our clients exceptional value is stronger than ever."

Market analysts had earlier criticized Derby for having a somewhat confusing public image, leading to changes.

Drivers Want Better Gas Mileage, Poll Says

By Christine Snyder
Staff Reporter

U.S. auto companies are straining to meet current CAFE standards and the average American isn't going to buy those small, high-mileage cars anyway, right?

A new national poll refutes some assumptions about American attitudes toward fuel efficiency standards.

The Mellman Group of Washington, D.C., polled 1,000 likely voters randomly nationwide and found 74 percent favored federal requirements to increase average fuel efficiency to 60 miles per gallon by the year 2025.

"That support was robust even when you bring cost issues to the fore," said Mark Mellman, president and CEO of the Mellman Group.

If bringing the standard to 60 mpg added \$3,000 to the price of a new car, 66 percent still favored the idea.

Too much too soon? Many of the pollsters aren't buying that, said Mellman.

Only 10 percent of the respondents thought the technology to meet a 60 mpg standard didn't already exist or would be difficult to develop.

Mellman said the fact that foreign automotive companies are already producing high-mileage vehicles is a convincing argument that the technology is available.

"People don't believe the automobile companies here (as it relates to fuel efficiency)," said Mellman. "If they say they can't do something, their credibility is (compromised) because . . . they said they couldn't meet previous standards and then met them, not being able to put in seatbelts and then airbags."

A majority of the respondents believed higher fuel economy standards have a variety of benefits from reducing fuel bills, decreasing air pollution and dependence on foreign oil, and protecting American autoworker jobs.

"People are initially disposed to believe it will help

the economy," said Mellman. "Most believe it would create jobs, a few believe it would cost jobs."

Environmental America, the Natural Resource Defense Council, the Sierra Club and the Union of Concerned Scientists sponsored the poll. The groups have formed the Go 60 MPG coalition to encourage President Obama, the Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Pro-

tection Agency (EPA) to increase fuel efficiency standards to at least 60 mpg by 2025.

The DOT and EPA will start the process for new clean car standards later this month. The standards will cover model years 2017 to 2025.

The survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percent and was conducted by telephone between Sept. 8 and 13.

2012 Ford Focus Electric in Spotlight at Trade Show

The 2012 Ford Focus Electric will be in the spotlight at a big car conference coming up in October in Detroit.

The 2010 Business of Plugging In conference will host an exclusive ride-and-drive event offering attendees the opportunity to get behind the wheel of several production and concept electric vehicles.

Held alongside the Detroit River and just steps away from the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center,

where the event is taking place, a test track will be available for attendees on Tuesday, Oct. 12 (from 12 noon to 6 p.m.) and Wednesday, Oct. 13 (from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.).

Confirmed production vehicles at the Plugging In ride and drive include the 2012 Ford Focus Electric, 2011 Ford Transit Connect electric utility truck, 2011 Chevrolet Volt and 2011 Nissan Leaf.

Confirmed pre-production

and concept vehicles at the show include 2010 AMP Chevrolet Equinox, CODA electric car, Ford Escape Plug-in Hybrid, Mini E, Protean Electric's Ford F-150 Battery Electric Test Vehicle and the smartfortwo electric drive small car.

Also, charging stations from Schneider Electric, PEP Stations and other vendors will be on display for visitors and attendees to interact with.

Overall, the Business of

Plugging In event will unite automotive, utility, technology, finance and policy leaders to continue the intelligent discussion surrounding the global PEV market.

Panels and sessions like "Preparing the PEV Workforce" will offer participants key insights on how the fledgling EV market will impact greater society and not just the local auto industry. The Center for Auto Research in Ann Arbor hosts the show.

Officials Praise New Driver Safety Rules at WSU Event

By Jim Stickford
Staff Reporter

Wayne State University kicked off its seventh annual "Drive to Wayne State Safely" campaign with a ribbon-cutting ceremony to commemorate the opening of the new Anthony Wayne Drive corridor by the school's engineering building.

The ceremony took place on Sept. 20, and featured guests included Jackie Paige, former traffic reporter for WJBK Fox TV-2, Michigan Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land, WSU president Allan Gilmour, WSU provost Ronald Brown, director of MDOT Kirk Stuedle, Detroit deputy mayor Saul Green, and director of Michigan State Police Eddie Washington.

Anthony Wayne Drive is undergoing infrastructure improvements between Warren Avenue and Kirby Street. The drive houses dorms, classroom buildings and retail shops. Part of the upgrade is designed to make the street more friendly to non-motorized users.

That means pedestrians and bicyclists, Gilmour said. The redesign of Wayne Drive coincided nicely with kickoff of the Drive Safely to Wayne State campaign.

Gilmour said Michigan has experienced the lowest rate of traffic fatalities since the 1940s. Part of the reason for this has been research done at universities such as Wayne State.

"Thanks to research, we are working off of facts, not opinions," Gilmour said.

This research offers officials responsible for traffic safety the information they need to help reduce traffic accidents.

One key recent change in Michigan traffic laws is the banning of texting while driving.

Brown said that studies indicate up to 20 percent of automobile crashes involve the driver using some sort of distracting electronic device. That adds up to 6,000 deaths a year.

Use of cell phones for talk-



PHOTO: JIM STICKFORD

WSU's Dr. Tappan Datta discussed traffic safety data related to the Detroit campus.

ing or texting is especially common among younger drivers, Brown said.

Many people believe talking on a cell phone while driving is not too dangerous because people have been talking in cars since their invention.

But research indicates that use of a cell phone delays a driver's reaction time, even to the point of reducing the driver's skill level to that of someone driving while drunk.

"Even the use of hands-free cell phones is still dangerous," Brown said.

One solution to this problem is public education, Land said. Which is why the Secretary of State's office has strengthened and codified driver education across the board. Whether someone is taking driver's ed at a public school or private academy, their curriculum and training will be consistent.

Washington said Michigan residents, whether as drivers, passengers or pedestrians interact with traffic just about every day of their lives. While laws are dealing with emerging technologies such as texting, it's up to drivers to be safe, he said.

"There are three kinds of distractions," Washington said. "Visual, something that takes your eyes off the road; manual, taking your hands off the wheel; and cognitive, taking your mind off what you should be doing – driving."

Texting involves all three of these distractions, Washing-

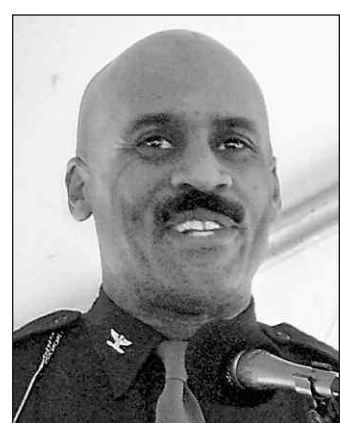


PHOTO: JIM STICKFORD

Eddie Washington, director of the Michigan State Police, spoke at the Wayne State event.

ton said. He has two young drivers in his family and, by making texting and driving illegal, it gives him one more tool when dealing with his children.

"They ask me why they can't text and drive, and I can say since July 1 of this year that it's dangerous and it's illegal," Washington said.

He noted that cars, thanks to engineering, seat belts and



PHOTO: JIM STICKFORD

A Wayne State University student checks out a vehicle that was damaged in an accident caused by a driver who was texting behind the wheel. The display was part of a WSU traffic safety event.

air bags, are safer than ever to drive. But that does no one any good if they have taken their hands off the steering wheel and their eyes off the road while texting.

Wayne State, meanwhile, has become something of an authority about traffic safety

over the years, in part, because the university had been a "commuter campus" for decades until a recent building boom resulted in new housing in and around WSU's midtown-Detroit location.

Dealing with car-related issues, from parking tickets to

traffic safety to vehicle break-ins, has also been a major concern of the University's Department of Public Safety.

Melding pedestrians, urban cyclists and thousands of commuters has also been an ongoing challenge for Wayne State University.

Tougher Laws to Cut Drivers' Distractions

By KEN THOMAS
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) – Making sure drivers keep their eyes on the road will require a network of tough laws, enforcement by police and personal responsibility, the U.S. government said last week.

Obama administration officials said during a second summit on distracted driving that it had made progress in pushing states to target drivers who send text messages and use mobile devices from the road, but too many people are being killed because of inattentive motorists.

"Every time someone takes their focus off the road – even if it's just for a moment – they put their lives and the lives of others in danger," said Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood.

Thirty states and the Washington district prohibit driv-

ers from texting behind the wheel; eight states have passed laws barring drivers from using handheld cell phones. Nearly 5,500 people were killed last year in distracted driving crashes.

The summit brought together government leaders, safety advocates and business groups to discuss ways of reducing distracted driving.

LaHood suggested the technology industry could place warning labels – "the way we put warning labels on cigarettes" – on the boxes of mobile phones urging consumers not to use the devices while driving.

The transportation secretary noted that automakers were adding in-vehicle technology that allows drivers to update their Facebook page, surf the Internet "or do any number of other things instead of driving safely."

"Features that pull drivers' hands, eyes and attention away from the road are distractions," said LaHood. He told reporters the technology could create a "cognitive distraction" and he would meet with auto companies to develop new safety guidelines for technology in vehicles.

Ford Motor Co. has marketed its in-car entertainment and communication service, known as Sync, and General Motors Co. recently announced plans to give its On-Star safety system better voice recognition so drivers could verbally connect with the Internet.

Automakers have said voice-activated systems are safer for drivers than trying to manipulate applications on their mobile devices.

As part of the summit, the Transportation Department proposed barring truck drivers from sending text mes-

sages while hauling hazardous materials. The proposal would close a loophole for hazardous material haulers not covered by separate rules being finalized that prohibit commercial bus and truck drivers from sending text messages on the job.

Safety advocates are trying to replicate the success of campaigns in the 1980s that helped reduce drunken driving deaths and increased the use of seat belts.

Legislation is pending in Congress to push all states to ban texting by drivers. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, a Democrat, said she was hopeful the Senate would consider the measure before the end of 2010.

Note that a recent NHTSA study found that 28 percent of all car accidents in the U.S. are caused by some form of driver distraction – including texting and related cell-phone use and mis-use.