



2011 Ford Explorer



2011 Chevrolet Cruze



2011 Dodge Avenger

Big Three Lead in IIHS 'Top Safety Pick' Honors

by Gerald Scott
Editor
U.S. Auto Scene

Coming on the heels of the recent news that Big Three cars and trucks dominated the North American Car/Truck of the Year lists, along comes more good news for the domestics regarding crash safety.

Just last week, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) announced its overall 66 Top Safety Awards and GM and Ford/Lincoln each had eight entries while

Chrysler had five.

The high ratings suggest that genuine vehicle safety is being built into some of the Big Three's largest sellers.

Ford was buoyant that its eight vehicles were the 2011 versions of the Ford Taurus, Explorer, Fusion, Fiesta, Flex, and Lincoln MKS, MKT and MKZ.

"The Ford Explorer sets a new standard for high-tech safer innovation," said Sue Cischke, Ford group vice president of Sustainability, Environment and Safety Engineering.

"The Explorer offers several new innovative technologies, including available industry-first production rear inflatable seat belts and Curve Control, which can help drivers maintain control of a vehicle if they enter a curve too quickly."

GM's eight 2011 vehicles were the Buick Lacrosse, Buick Regal, Cadillac CTS, Chevrolet Cruze, Chevrolet Malibu, Cadillac SRX, Chevrolet Equinox and GMC Terrain.

"The new Cruze was clearly engineered from the ground up to meet the highest stan-

dards in safety performance," said IIHS President Adrian Lund. "The Top Safety Pick means that buyers of the Cruze will know they're getting state-of-the-art protection in the most common kinds of crashes."

GM says that the 2011 Cruze offers more standard safety features than any vehicle in its class and represents Chevrolet's commitment to continuous safety – before,

during and after a crash.

To earn a Top Safety Pick, a vehicle must receive a rating of "Good" in offset frontal-, side-, and rear-impact crash tests and roof strength evaluations, as well as offer electronic stability control.

"Explorer has a history of safety innovation, from side-curtain airbags to AdvanceTrac with RSC (Roll Stability Control), and now offering the world's first production rear-

inflatable seat belts," said Craig Patterson, Explorer marketing manager.

"Explorer customers value safety and security. Safety features are one of the top reasons customers cite for their purchases of Explorers and SUVs in general."

Indeed, the high scores by the Big Three across the board on IIHS crash testing

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'11 Lincoln MKX Joins Kem on Cover

Universal Motown recording artist Kem and the 2011 Lincoln MKX crossover will share the spotlight on the cover of the January/February issues of *Dub Magazine*.

The issue, which goes on sale Friday, Dec. 31, marks the first time that the Lincoln MKX and Kem have appeared together on the cover of *Dub Magazine*.

During the cover shoot, which took place earlier this year in Los Angeles, Kem had the opportunity to take a spin in the newest luxury crossover vehicle from Lincoln.

"It's sleek, sharp and smooth," Kem said of the MKX during the photo shoot.

"Lincoln really paid attention to the details, it's a sharp ride," Kem continued. "My favorite feature in the Lincoln MKX is the stereo system. It's like I'm sitting in my own living room listening to me. You have got to love it."

Kem, who was recently nominated for two Grammy awards, partnered with Lincoln on last month's "Lincoln MKX/Touch Me All Over" con-



Motown artist Kem graces the cover of the January-February edition of *Dub Magazine* together with the 2011 Lincoln MKX.

sumer test-drive event, which took place in National Harbor, Md.

The event included an intimate performance by Kem and an opportunity for consumers to take a drive in the Lincoln MKX.

Also, the 2011 Lincoln MKX crossover featured on the

cover is a special DUB-edition and boasts 24-inch wheels and performance suspension system.

Dub Magazine is available at most chain bookstore newsstands.

The publication covers urban custom car culture and features celebrities.

Annual Motown Winter Blast Will Return to Detroit

by Gerald Scott
Editor
U.S. Auto Scene

There's more good news to report from downtown Detroit these days.

Not only is the 2011 Detroit auto show lining up to be bigger and better than ever come January, but the annual Motown Winter Blast will be making a return visit to Campus Martius one month later.

Officials announced last week that the Motown Winter blast returns to Campus Martius Park in downtown Detroit

for the seventh consecutive year, Feb. 11-13.

The celebration of winter and family fun, dining and music welcomes several new sponsors including the General Motors Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and GalaxE.Solutions, and together they will provide visitors with a non-stop lineup of winter activities.

"Through the years, Winter Blast has touched the community in many ways," said Jon Witz, event producer.

"The festival serves as a backdrop to bring people from

all over metro Detroit and beyond to the downtown area. It's a great economic boom for the city of Detroit. We are also excited to announce extended hours as we will now open on Friday at 11 a.m., instead of 3 p.m., thanks to the support of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan."

Witz gathered with civic and community leaders, including Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano and Detroit City Council President Charles Pugh, at Campus Martius for the announcement last week.

"The Motown Winter Blast

is one of my favorite events and I am proud that it is back in Detroit for its seventh year," said Pugh.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan will also be the title sponsor of snowshoeing, an activity that offers festival guests the opportunity to enjoy a fun, casual physical activity at the outdoor festival.

"Since its inception, Winter Blast has served the community in so many ways," said Ficano. "The festival is an outstanding way to showcase our

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The Focus C-Max is coming to the North American market in 2012.

Ford Focus C-Max Compact Minivan Combines Space with Fuel Economy

by Stefanie Carano
Staff Reporter
Detroit Auto Scene

Ford Motor Co. is expanding its global vehicle lineup with the introduction of the Focus C-Max, a 'minivan' vehicle built on a compact platform.

The C-Max is intended to provide the space and convenience features of a family vehicle while offering better fuel economy than your standard minivan.

"We think customers are going to love how the C-Max combines technology, convenience and functionality into such a tiny overall footprint," said Derrick Kuzak, Ford's vice president of global product development.

Kuzak said that, despite its compact platform, the Focus C-Max is similar in size to the original minivans with a wheelbase of 109.7 inches and an overall length of 178 inches.

The vehicle has a 5 + 2 vehi-

cle layout, allowing for flexible seating, offering room for either five passengers and generous cargo in the back or seating for up to seven passengers. In the seven-passenger seating configuration, the vehicle has three rows of seats. The second- and third-row seats can be folded for extra storage. The rear outboard seats slide and recline, as well as tip and slide.

It also has dual-sliding rear doors and a hands-free liftgate.

With the hands-free liftgate,

two sensors on the vehicle's rear bumper detect motion on the ground behind the vehicle, such as when a driver or passenger approaches the rear liftgate to load groceries. Once motion is detected, the door opens automatically.

The feature is only enacted when the vehicle's key fob is in the vicinity of the vehicle to prevent accidental openings.

The hands-free liftgate uses the same Intelligent Access technology that allows for push-button start – where the vehicle's engine is turned on with the push of a button after sensors detect a key in the driver's possession.

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AAA Says State Drivers to Pay \$3 Per Gallon

The estimated 2.9 million Michigan residents who will travel this end-of-year 2011 holiday period will pay 1.8 cents more for gas this week, says AAA Michigan, based in Dearborn.

The current statewide average is \$2.999, which is 44.7 cents per gallon higher than last year. The average for self-service regular gas rose 1.6 cents in metro Detroit over the past week, with the average at \$3.001 per gallon.

The metro Detroit average is now 45.8 cents per gallon higher than last year at this same time. AAA surveys 2,800 Michigan gas stations daily to come up with the figures it uses on its AAA Fuel Gauge Report.

On a related note, the Oil Price Information Service reports that on a national basis, commodity inflation has reared its ugly head at the pump this holiday season in the guise of retail gasoline prices that are nearly \$1.35/gallon higher than they were during the 12 days of Christmas in 2008.

OPIS says that average prices for gasoline are currently flirting with \$3.00/gallon on a national basis, and by simply matching typical historical performances, drivers should brace themselves for U.S. pump prices that could rally to their 2nd highest in history by this spring.

Visteon Intros New Displays

VAN BUREN TWP. – Global auto supplier Visteon Corp. has enhanced its capabilities in developing multi-function displays for vehicles by incorporating a newly developed microprocessor in its next-generation MFD platform architecture.

Located on the vehicle's instrument panel, multi-function displays provide a range of information to drivers, either as stand-alone displays or in combination with radios, navigation devices and external cameras.

"Visteon is a leading supplier of multi-function displays and other cockpit electronics products to major vehicle manufacturers globally, and we expect this new platform architecture to broaden our customer base even further," said Christian Feltgen, Visteon's global director of cockpit electronics technologies.

By incorporating a new Renesas Electronics microprocessor, Visteon can offer vehicle manufacturers more cost-effective, multi-function display products integrating features that previously were external to the microprocessor.

This reduction in components and complexity can decrease design and engineering time and contribute to more efficient use of space inside the vehicle, Visteon further says.



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

Civic officials, led by Wayne County Executive Robert Ficano, third from left, kicked off the Motown Winter Blast announcement by roasting marshmallows at Campus Martius Park. The popular winter festival will return Feb. 11-13.