



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

Dr. Stephen Russ, Direct Injection SME for Ford, briefs local automotive media about the 2.0 GDI engine at the Ford Dynamometer Lab in Dearborn last week.

Ford's 2.0L Gasoline Direct Injection Engine Is a Hit

by Gerald Scott
Editor
U.S. Auto Scene

The EPA has said that Ford engines have made the most improvements in fuel efficiency of any of the Big Three automakers over the past decade or so.

Engines have gotten smaller displacements, but with turbocharging and other techniques, even 2.0L engines these days are powerful enough to drive SUVs like the stalwart Ford Explorer (well, the EcoBoost version, that is).

The 2.0L Explorer is projected to deliver best-in-class fuel economy.

How Ford has achieved these major improvements in their family of engines was the subject of a media briefing by powertrain experts at the Ford Dynamometer Lab in Dearborn last week.

There, the likes of Robert Fascetti, director, Large Gas and Diesel Engine Engineering; Scott Makowski, manager, I4 Engine Programs and Dr. Stephen Russ, Direct Injection SME, together briefed local auto writers on the merits of the current 2.0L Ford engine.

"We call this one our GDI – gasoline direct injection (engine), it's the same as the EcoBoost minus the supercharger," Ford Powertrain Communications Manager Richard Truett pointed out.

A 2.0L engine on a mobile stand plus separate 2011 and 2012 Ford engine parts were available for participants to examine in greater detail.

"When it comes to all the recent comments associated with the price of a barrel of oil, what it's doing to the cost of gasoline, I can tell you that we at Ford are not surprised," Fascetti said.

"We've been planning for this for the last five years. Obviously, no one likes expensive gasoline – it's disruptive to our lives, it's disruptive to the nation's economy – but in 2006, we began planning for higher fuel prices."

Of course, that's the same year that current Ford CEO Alan Mulally arrived on the scene in Dearborn and that the Ford enterprise began embracing the so-called One Ford Plan in earnest.

Dividends are now paying off handsomely in terms of this new generation of fuel-efficient engines that Ford Powertrain experts have devised.

"Around 2006, we laid out plans to create powertrains that can compete in the world where gasoline is going to be a little bit more expensive," Fascetti continued.

"We have one simple sentence that clearly defines our

strategy going forward – it's to be a fuel economy leader in every segment that we compete in . . ."

Of course, gas prices spiked so famously in 2008 to over \$4 average nationwide, before settling back to between \$2.50 and \$3. Today, it's still gyrating between \$3 and \$4 per gallon depending on the geography, but the long-term trend does seem to be upward, according to AAA and other retail-gas pricing authorities.

"If you've driven a Ford lately, or a Lincoln, it's most likely equipped with a number of new technologies – or at least consistent technologies," Fascetti continued.

"Six-speed transmissions are out there on just about every vehicle we've got, electric power steering, as well our EcoBoost engines.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Strong Car Sales Drive \$5B in Consumer Loans

WASHINGTON (AP) – Consumers borrowed more in January to purchase new cars but were once again frugal with their credit cards, offering a mixed sign of their confidence in the economy.

The Federal Reserve says total borrowing rose at an annual rate of \$5 billion in January, or 2.5 percent, the fourth consecutive gain. Strong car sales drove the increase. The category that includes auto loans rose 6.9 percent.

Credit card debt fell 6.4 percent in January, the 28th decline in 29 months. Americans had increased their use of plastic in

December for the first time since the financial crisis. But they cut back the following month, even though a Social Security tax cut is giving most households an extra \$1,000 to \$2,000 this year.

Combined, total consumer credit equaled \$2.41 trillion, a slight 0.7 percent above a three-year low hit in September. Consumer borrowing is 6.6 percent below the high hit in July 2008.

Analysts are predicting that consumers will borrow more in the months ahead, responding

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Ford Seeks First Euro Customers for EV Transit

OSLO, Norway – Ford Motor Co. and Azure Dynamics Corporation have confirmed their first European customer for the zero-emission Ford Transit Connect Electric van. Norwegian Post last week signed a contract to purchase 20 Transit Connect Electric vehicles, with an option to order more vehicles in the future. Norwegian Post is the largest provider of mail and logistics services and the biggest employer in Norway.

"The Norwegian Post will be an environmental leader in the mail and logistics industry by taking advantage of the latest technology available," said Dag Mejdell, CEO, Norwegian Post.

"In signing a contract for delivery of the new Ford Transit Connect Electric, the Norwegian Post is taking an important step towards its goal of reducing 150,000 tons of CO2 annually."

Ford and Azure are introducing the Transit Connect Electric in summer 2011, as increasing numbers of fleet op-

erators are demanding the benefits of efficient, clean alternative power for their vehicles.

With 28 kWh of power to call on, Transit Connect Electric has a top speed of 120 km/h (75 mph) and a range of up to 130 km (80 miles) on a full charge.

"Transit Connect Electric was designed and engineered with customers like Norwegian Post in mind," said Scott Harrison, Azure CEO.

"The ForceDrive™ powertrain excels under the types of urban driving conditions that the Transit Connect Electric is likely to encounter during postal delivery routes. We're honored to have Norwegian Post as our inaugural customer in Europe and are eager to help them achieve the environmental, operational and performance goals that they seek."

The Ford Transit Connect Electric – Ford's first all-electric vehicle in Europe – is the first of five electrified vehicles that Ford plans to launch in



Ford and supplier Azure are now courting European fleet customers for the Transit Connect Electric utility van.

Europe by 2013. Next comes the Ford Focus Electric in 2012, followed by the C-MAX Hybrid and C-MAX Energi plug-in hybrid, as well as another hybrid electric model in 2013.

"By providing a variety of electrified vehicles, we are making it easier for our customers to embrace this fuel-saving technology," said Thormod Skofsrud, managing director, Ford Norway. "This strategy is true to our heritage of making innovative technol-

ogy available to as many people as possible and to our vision of developing great products."

Transit Connect Electric will offer European operators the opportunity to eliminate petrol bills in their small vans and help to lower overall maintenance and running costs.

Ford's Transit Connect commercial platform is an ideal choice for battery electric

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



PHOTO: GERALD SCOTT

LTU transportation design student Cherise Caldwell used the Ford Fiesta as the basis for her stylishly designed wheels, which were inspired by the same shapes she saw in wind turbines.

Ford Designers Judge LTU Contest

by Gerald Scott
Editor
U.S. Auto Scene

Undergraduate students in Lawrence Technological University's transportation design program got to deliver some real-world project presentations recently.

LTU students competing in the "Steel Wheels" design contest presented their final entries to judges that included professionals from GM Design and Ford Design staffs, among others.

The Wheels Task Force of the Steel Market Development Institute (SMDI), Michelin and Lawrence Technological University (LTU) announced the scholarship winners of the steel wheel design competition at the program's unveiling last week at the LTU campus.

"The steel wheel design competition presented student designers with a rare opportunity to influence the growing automotive styled steel wheel market," Ron Krupitzer, vice president, automotive market, SMDI said.

"This year, the students took steel to a new level in terms of lightweighting and their designs proved to be low mass, feasible automakers and customers would love."

The team of professional design judges included Teckla Rhodes, Erwin Angala and Brian Clauw from GM, as well as Scott Strong and Murat Gueler from Ford.

The competing LTU students gave four-minute pitches to the judges, followed by two minutes of Q&A and banter and critical praise.

The inspirations that the students drew from to design

their wheels were as diverse as the world they live in.

One student said he was inspired by the inner workings of a watch, while another student said she was inspired by the visual effects of a wind generator – that and the DNA double-helix.

Bright, motivated kids, these LTU transportation students.

Colin Bonathan, a sophomore, won first place and was awarded a \$2,500 scholarship. Chris Nichols, who received a \$1,500 scholarship, and Matthew Eash, a sophomore, placed third and were awarded \$100 each.

Bonathan's winning design included a modern wheel designed for a 2011 Chrysler 300, which includes a cylindrical shape that offers more

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Ricardo Consulting Earns Ford Award

VAN BUREN TOWNSHIP, Mich. – The World Excellence Awards recognize suppliers that have aligned themselves with the values and operating practices of Ford while reaching the highest quality, technology, cost and delivery standards. The winning companies represent thousands of employees who bring diverse cultures, values and ideas to Ford in the products and services they provide.

"We made tremendous progress on the One Ford plan in 2010 and the partnership with our suppliers was absolutely critical in making that happen," said Alan Mulally, Ford president and CEO.

"Thanks to all of our World Excellence Award winners for the work you are doing to contribute to our mutual success and serve our global customers with the very best

cars and trucks." There are three levels of World Excellence Awards – Gold, Silver and Recognition of Achievement. Gold and Silver awards are presented to suppliers demonstrating superior quality, delivery and cost performance. Fifteen Gold and twenty-six Silver Awards were presented this year.

Ricardo Strategic Consulting received the Gold World Excellence award for the work of the company's strategic consulting team based at Van Buren Township, Mich., which has supported the development and implementation of Ford service parts value management processes.

This work forms part of Ricardo's highly successful Integrated Cost Reduction service line, which by September 2010 had chalked up total

cost savings of more than \$100 million achieved for clients since the service was introduced in 2005.

"Working with a range of blue chip clients such as Ford, our Integrated Cost Reduction process has been shown to realize very tangible savings while maintaining and improving upon levels of performance, quality and service," said Kevin Hauser, vice president of Ricardo Strategic Consulting North America.

"That having been said, we could not have been so successful without the relentless drive for continuous improvement and day-to-day support of our client management team at Ford.

"I would like to thank Ford personally for the company's generosity in recognizing our

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Kevin Hauser, left, vice president, Ricardo Strategic Consulting, receives Ford's Gold World Excellence Award for Cost Reduction Achievement, accompanied by Andrew Chien, center, president, Ricardo Strategic Consulting, from Frederick Toney, vice president, Ford Customer Service Division.