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31201 Chicago Road South #A-101
Warren, Michigan 48093
586-939-6800

Lisa A. Torretta, Office of the Publisher
William L. Springer, Publisher

Gerald B. Scott, News Director
News@TechCenterNews.com

AD DEADLINE: Thursday 5:00 p.m. for the next edition
Ads@TechCenterNews.com 586-939-5850 Fax

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Detroit Auto Scene

THIS WEEK™ - FIRST IN THE HEART OF DETROIT

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10 Demo Ram Plug-in Hybrid Electrics Go to DTE

AUBURN HILLS – Chrysler Group LLC, working in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), delivered 10 demonstration fleet Ram 1500 plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) pickup trucks to DTE Energy of Detroit.

The PHEV Ram 1500 pickups, delivered by Abdullah Bazzi, senior manager of the Chrysler Group's advanced hybrid vehicle project, are part of a national demonstration fleet of 140 vehicles that will be used during the next three years to evaluate customer usage, drive cycles, charging, thermal management, fuel economy, emissions and impact on the region's electric grid.

In addition to DTE Energy of Detroit, more than 100 vehicles have been delivered to 16 different cities in the past six months.

"Cities have been carefully selected to help the Chrysler Group LLC collect a wide range of data," explained Bazzi.

"Working with a local energy partner like DTE that is in our backyard offers a great combination of suburban and rural driving, as well as ever-changing Michigan weather, is ideal as a test cycle for these vehicles. The constant charging will allow us to measure the impact on battery life and

charging efficiency." Chrysler Group LLC began delivering Ram 1500 PHEV trucks to the city of Yuma, Ariz., in May, 2011, to take full advantage of hot weather and conduct thermal testing in the desert Southwest.

Other cities that have received the demonstration Ram 1500 pickups include San Francisco and Sacramento, Calif.; Charlotte, N.C.; Boston, and Albany, N.Y.

Just recently, the New York Police Department also took delivery of five PHEV Ram 1500 PHEV trucks.

"The trucks will provide us with a glimpse of what kind of fuel savings can be afforded with PHEV technologies so we

can, at some point, make our truck fleet more environmentally friendly," said Trevor Lauer, DTE Energy vice president, Marketing and Renewables.

"We'll be using the trucks at our service centers and in the field at our renewable energy facilities."

Strictly a demonstration program, there are no plans for a production version of the PHEV Ram 1500 trucks at this time, Ram officials say.

Cities and states were selected to evaluate temperature extremes, urban traffic cycles and diverse climates and geographies.

The Ram 1500 PHEV includes a liquid-cooled

12.9kWhr lithium ion-battery pack and a 6.6 kilowatt on-board charger.

Additional features include AC power generation of up to 6.6kW; directional charging; reverse power flow, and full regenerative braking used to capture more energy.

For fuel economy improvements, the front axle of the four-wheel-drive automatic transmission can be disconnected when not needed.

The powertrain also includes a 5.7-liter HEMI V8 engine and a two-mode hybrid transmission. The 5.7-liter Hemi is equipped with a Fuel Saver technology that improves fuel efficiency at highway speeds.

Caddy to Intro New 2.0L Turbo 4-Cylinder Engine

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two-stage variable-displacement oil pump with jet-spray piston cooling.

Overall engine friction is reduced by up to 16 percent. The low-friction design means engine power is delivered more efficiently.

Proprietary computational fluid dynamics analysis techniques were used to develop an all-new combustion system with a higher compression ratio, which also helped boost efficiency.

"The 2.0T is one of the most advanced and efficient engines of its kind, and contributes to the ATS's exceptional balance of performance and great fuel efficiency," said Mike Anderson, chief engineer for the 2.0T engine.

The 2.0T has a wide torque curve, delivering 90 percent of its peak 260 lb.-ft. of torque (353 Nm) from 1,500 rpm to

5,800 rpm. This gives the ATS the feeling of immediate power, whether from launch at a stop light or during higher-speed maneuvers, such as passing.

The turbocharger generates up to 20 pounds of boost and its twin-scroll design helps optimize power availability, virtually eliminating turbo lag and helping deliver a broad power band.

"It has the exhilarating, responsive power available when you want it, yet can provide the fuel efficiency that will make the ATS a fully competitive vehicle in global markets," Anderson said.

Additional details on the ATS will be announced at the 2012 NAIAS.

The ATS will be built at the Lansing Grand River plant alongside the Cadillac CTS Sedan, Coupe and Sport Wagon and V-Series performance cars.



The Chrysler Town & Country minivan was one of 11 such 2012-model year Chrysler vehicles awarded a "Top Safety Pick" by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS).

Chrysler Gets IIHS's Award for Top Safety Picks

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novations that are standard or available on many models is SafetyTec, which includes ParkSense rear park assist, Blind Spot Monitoring and Rear Cross Path detection.

"With 11 vehicles that have been named Top Safety Pick for 2012 by IIHS, this underscores our commitment to engineering safety and security across all vehicle segments," said Scott Kunselman, senior vice president - Engineering, Chrysler Group LLC.

"As we continue our product transformation, we'll continue to engineer new technology and more capabilities into all our vehicles."

With public votes of confidence from third-party evaluators such as the IIHS, auto analysts say that Chrysler is now much better positioned to use "safety" as a marketing and sales tool when it engages the public about the 11 vehicles listed above. In autos, safety equals sales.

Borrowing Increases; Consumers Confident?

By DEREK KRAVITZ
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) - Americans stepped up their borrowing in October to buy cars and attend college, and they also charged a little more to their credit cards.

The second straight monthly gain in overall borrowing suggests consumers are growing more confident in the economy ahead of the crucial holiday buying season.

Total consumer borrowing rose by \$7.6 billion, the Federal Reserve said last week. September and October's gains reversed a steep drop in borrowing from August, when it fell by the most in 16 months.

The October increase reflected a 5.3 percent increase in borrowing in the category that includes car and student loans. The category that covers credit card purchases rose 0.6 percent, which matched September's gain after a revision.

Borrowing has increased in 11 of the past 12 months. But credit card use has increased only six times in the past two years. It declined in both July and August, when many Americans were worried about the economy and more cautious about taking on high-interest debt.

That may be changing. The economy grew at an annual rate of 2.5 percent in the July-September period, nearly three times the growth rate in the first six months of the year. Most economists expect similar growth in the final three months of the year.

Consumers are spending more freely and their confidence is on the rise again. In November, the unemployment rate fell to 8.6 percent, the lowest point in two-and-a-half years. The economy has

generated 100,000 or more jobs five months in a row - the first time that has happened since April 2006.

Still, economists worry that the spending gains may be temporary because wages are barely keeping pace with inflation. In other words, workers aren't getting raises.

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