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TECH CENTER NEWS - DETROIT AUTO SCENE

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## **GMC Sierra HD Pickup Trucks on '20-Month Run'**



"I live at 7,000 feet above sea level, work at 2,500 feet, and trailer horses and cattle to my ranch up at 9,000 feet," said loyal GMC truck buyer John Jay Johns, Jr., who purchased his second HD, a 3500 Denali, at James Wood GMC in Decatur, Texas.

## HD pickup truck is carrying the mail, so to speak, when it comes to sales in the heavy duty truck category.

With a strong February performance, GMC Sierra HD fullsize pickup total sales hit 20 consecutive months of sales increases. Owner John Jay Johns Jr. says the truck's capability is one reason he recently purchased his second Sierra HD.

"I live at 7,000 feet above sea level, work at 2,500 feet, and trailer horses and cattle to my ranch up at 9,000 feet," said Johns, who purchased his second HD, a 3500 Denali catur, Texas.

In addition to driving up to 7,000 miles a month as salesman at a family-owned food processing plant, he owns a horse ranch high in the mountains and volunteers with a local disaster relief group in Ruidoso, N.M.

"My new GMC already proved itself on these inclines when I stopped to help a disabled semi on an incline while towing 17,000 pounds of equipment," he said. "Even with that load, the truck got moving again, and later, the exhaust brake and trailer fire's path. "Like most of my to construction firms and utilbrake control helped me friends, the local fire depart- ities, were up 49.0 percent.

DETROIT - The GMC Sierra at James Wood GMC in De- avoid an accident when I ment has traded in Dodges a mile coming down a hill."

The Sierra HD was redesigned for the 2011 model power and 765 lb-ft of torque.

With his varied pursuits, Johns needs that kind of strength. With his previous wildfires and helped trailer

needed to stop in just 1/8th of and Fords for all General Motors trucks," Johns said. His 2007 Sierra HD had 135,000 odometer miles at

vear and boasts a best-in- trade-in. Johns is hoping for class maximum towing capac- 200,000 miles in his new ity of 23,000 pounds and an truck. "So far, I'm averaging optional Duramax diesel en- about 19.5 miles per gallon, gine generating 397 horse- and I really love my Bluetooth, which lets me keep my eyes on the road while making phone calls."

In February, total sales of GMC Sierra 2500, he delivered the GMC Sierra HD, including supplies to teams battling 34-ton and 1-ton models, were up 19.9 percent year-overdozens of horses out of a year. Commercial truck sales,

## LaCrosse with eAssist Draws Buyers

DETROIT – The 2012 Buick LaCrosse with eAssist continues to lure customers looking for a spacious fullsize luxury sedan that gets the fuel economy of many compacts. In February, an all-time high one-in-four LaCrosse buyers chose the eAssist model.

In California, the take-rate for the 36-highway-mpg sedan reached 31 percent.

"The eAssist technology is bringing in buyers from premium brands like BMW. Lexus and Audi," said Greg Anderson, sales manager at Casa de Cadillac Buick GMC in Sherman Oaks, Calif.

"These new Buick customers are interested in technology and fully loaded models. One came off the truck on Sunday that we had already sold on Thursday. The eAssist story is getting out, and buyers are interested "

LaCrosse with eAssist uses a compact lithium-ion battery pack and small electric motor to aid the performance of a fuel-efficient 2.4-liter gas enwhile advanced gine, start/stop technology allows the vehicle to operate on just electricity while at rest. eAs- its to the gas pump, but they sist replaced a conventional 2.4L gas engine in the 2012 LaCrosse lineup, which aver- vice president of Buick and aged 11 percent of 2011 sales. GMC Marketing. "Through in-

Fuel prices historically have helped drive sales of LaCrosse with eAssist delivers four-cylinder LaCrosse vehi- great fuel economy without cles. When sales peaked for sacrificing a spacious cabin,



"The eAssist technology is bringing in buyers from premium brands like BMW, Lexus and Audi," said Greg Anderson, sales manager at a California Buick dealership. "These new Buick customers are interested in technology and fully loaded models. One came off the truck on Sunday that we had already sold on Thursday. The eAssist story is getting out, and buyers are interested."

eAssist's predecessor, the national average cost for a gallon of regular fuel was \$3.90, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. Gas prices are again on the rise, up more than 50 cents a gallon since the beginning of 2012. Many predict U.S. fuel costs to reach an all-time high this summer.

"Consumers want fewer visdon't want to compromise either," said Tony DiSalle, U.S. telligent technology, the

strong acceleration, or signature Buick quietness.'

Buick's eAssist was listed among the "Best of What's New" technologies for 2011 by the editors of Popular Science.

Meanwhile, according to hybridcars.com, LaCrosse with eAssist outsold the Lincoln MKZ hybrid three to one in February. The LaCrosse with eAssist also outsold hybrids like the Lexus RX450h, Infiniti M35h, and BMW Hybrid 7.

Retail sales of the LaCrosse eAssist and V6 models included - were up 24.9 percent in February, a month in which it was Buick's top-selling nameplate.

The eAssist powertrain is standard on the 2012 LaCrosse with a suggested starting price of \$31,045 including destination. Buick recently announced eAssist technology will be standard on the 2013 Regal luxury sport sedan. It is currently available on that vehicle as a stand-alone option.

eAssist technology, as applied to the LaCrosses, uses a variety of technical tools to help give the car the exceptional gas mileage that it achieves.

Those tools include regenerative braking and full-stop with engine off at street lights, which combines to help give the car exceptional fuel economy. There is hybrid motor assist to the gas engine, too.





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