

Chevy Uses 'Pet Day' at NYAS as Marketing Tool

NEW YORK – They're warm, cuddly and put a smile on the face of their owners. As they become a bigger part of their owners' lives, pets also should be top of mind when buying a new automobile.

Nearly 6 in 10 respondents to a 2011 AAA/Kurgo survey said they had driven with their dog in the automobile at least once a month in the past year. As thousands of consumers check out the latest automobiles this week at the New York Auto Show on National Pet Day, they can make life easier for them and their pets by taking a closer look at what works best for their four-legged friend.

"From subcompact hatchbacks to full-size SUVs, Chevrolet vehicles today provide plenty of choices to meet the needs of owners and pets of all shapes and sizes," said Charlotte Reed, a pet lifestyle expert and First for Women pet solutions columnist.

"To avoid stress, do your homework in advance and make note of your specific pet's needs and review safety features," Reed said.

"Whether you need space, special safety features or convenience technologies, today's automobiles offer a range of options that can make traveling more enjoyable."

Here are a few tips to keep in mind for finding a pet-

friendly vehicle:

- Safety features. According to the 2011 AAA/Kurgo study, three out of 10 pet owners admit to being distracted while driving. One in five admits to driving with a pet in their lap.

- The Chevrolet Equinox, for example, has lane-departure warning systems, stability and traction control and forward-collision alerts that help heighten driver alertness to possible danger.

- Owners can reduce distractions by keeping pets restrained in the back seat or in a pet carrier.

- Exterior and interior features. Look for vehicles that are wide, tall and slightly square at the back. This will make it easier to get pets and pet equipment into and out of vehicles.

- Cargo room and additional cup holders are useful to stow pet food, water and accessories.

- The Chevrolet Traverse crossover sport utility offers best-in-class roominess and class-leading cargo space, say Chevy officials, adding that it has flexible and fold-flat seating, as well as a rear cooling system that is ideal for pets on a hot summer day.

- In-vehicle technology. The Chevrolet Equinox, Traverse and Tahoe SUV offer power lift-gates that make it easier for users to access the vehicle. They also have fold-

flat seats offer more space for transporting pets and crates. Additional safety and security technology such as remote unlock, vehicle location and crash-detection services from OnStar can provide live help at a touch of a button during pet-emergency situations.

Chevy officials point out that all Chevrolet vehicles come equipped with OnStar that uses GPS and cellular technology to provide help during emergency situations – such as finding the nearest veterinarian's office while traveling in unfamiliar territory.

- Fuel efficiency. Gas-saving vehicles can save money, leaving more to spend for pet treats and toys. With that in mind, Chevy officials say that, in addition to extra space, the Equinox crossover offers the

interior room of an SUV along with the improved handling and fuel economy of a car. With its rear hatch and fold-down seats, the Volt extended-range electric vehicle is an option that's good for both your pet and the environment.

National Pet Day is sponsored by the Animal Miracle Foundation & Network to celebrate the joy pets bring to our lives and to create public awareness about the plight of many different kinds of animals awaiting a forever home in shelters all across the nation.

Considering how most families and pet owners consider the cat or dog as an extension of the family, it's only surprising that the OEMs haven't embraced this angle even more thoroughly than they are do-



Charlotte Reed, a pet lifestyle expert, checks on her dog Hannah, a golden retriever, who is wearing a safety harness, in the back seat of a Chevrolet Equinox during a Pet Day event at the New York Auto Show. According to the 2011/12 AAA/Kurgo survey, 84 percent of pet owners don't use pet safety restraints, as recommended.

ing now such as GM at the New York Auto Show. Pets are big business and how they mix with cars will be interesting to monitor both now and

in the future.

Fido and Tabby are as important to the auto OEMs now as have long been mom, dad and the kids.

GE to Fill Role of Host Partner at '12 SAE Congress

by Ken Brown
Special Writer

At a quick glance, General Electric might appear to be a surprising choice as the Tier One Strategic Partner with host company Nissan at the upcoming SAE 2012 World Congress and Exhibition.

Most would generally expect to see that role filled by a familiar supplier of OEM parts and systems, or perhaps a manufacturing associate.

The former GE Plastics Division actually was a major supplier of components to the automotive sector up until GE sold its plastics business a few years ago.

Perhaps more importantly, though, GE has also participated in past World Congress and Exhibition events through its Intelligent Platforms business that provides

software, automation and embedded computing to automakers on the "front end" to help optimize their manufacturing operations.

And, with many electric vehicles already being sold and the likelihood of steadily higher EV sales in the future, GE believes that its experience and competence in many related fields makes it well-positioned for a supply/collaboration role to help automakers address inevitable and potentially difficult EV ecosystem and infrastructure integration challenges.

In addition to the Industrial Platforms activity, GE points to other businesses in its overall portfolio that will help facilitate a greatly expanded EV presence.

Key examples are:

- Industrial Solutions that makes smart EV charging stations
- Digital Energy that sells distribution and load management systems to help ensure reliable power management and delivery
- Appliances and Lighting

that is enabling smart homes of the future to manage household power usage as well as an EV charging station

- Fleet Services that already provides management solutions for fleet owners covering more than 1.6 million vehicles worldwide.

As well as highlighting the "availability" of these capabilities to the automotive and other manufacturing industries, GE Chairman and CEO Jeffrey Immelt has in recent years been emphasizing that GE is committed to continued R&D investment in its technologies.

He also has been energetically urging American companies to maximize their technology R&D budgets, saying he is convinced that this is a critical requirement for achieving "An American Renewal" based on regaining global leadership and export competitiveness in technological innovation.

This message was stressed again by Immelt when, in a June 26, 2009, speech at the Detroit Economic Club, he announced that GE would invest



For the first time ever, General Electric is the Tier One Strategic Partner (sponsor) at the upcoming SAE Congress. Jeffrey Immelt, Chairman and CEO of GE, will be giving a keynote speech at the Congress.

in building a new Advanced Manufacturing and Software Technology Center (AMSTC) in Van Buren Township.

Immelt said he believed that Michigan could partner with GE "to create the next wave of economic progress."

He added in a news release issued on the same day that "Michigan is a great location for a technology center because of its world-class engineering, technical talent and public officials who understand that investing now will create tomorrow's leading positions in information technology, clean energy and transportation."

The new GE AMSTC opened its doors in October 2009, having launched an initial recruiting campaign for about 1,100 hires. By mid-January 2010, the Center had reportedly attracted 18,000 job applications, underscoring Michigan's then unemployment rate of close to 15 percent.

GE says the information technologists currently working at the Center are helping to develop innovative new software, processes and technologies to "drive excellence in manufacturing" for GE and its customers in the automotive and other industries.

Company officials have expressed great satisfaction with the talent levels of the new hires, who currently number close to 850, with almost 90 percent of those from Michigan. Employment at the Center is expected to continue growing over the next few years and will eventually represent the largest concentration of GE Information Technology experts in the world.

Last September, Nissan signed a two-year research collaboration agreement with GE to accelerate integration of EVs into "everyday living." Under the terms of the agreement, Nissan's Farmington Hills-based Technical Center is working with GE Global Research on two identified key research focus areas.

The first is related to the integration of EVs with homes and buildings; the second will examine EV charging dynamics and the future impact on the power grid of having potentially millions of EVs on the road.

And this, of course, appears to be exactly the type of collaborative – and potentially "win-win" – advanced technology initiative for which GE has been positioning itself to be able to "succeed."

Accordingly, Nissan's choice of GE as its "Tier One Strategic Partner" for the SAE 2012 World Congress and Exhibition, the theme of which is "GetConnected," no longer seems at all surprising.

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