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Mopar Ram Runner Termed 'Ultimate Desert Racer'

AUBURN HILLS – The Mopar Ram Runner and the Ford SVT Raptor met for a shootout at Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA), a state park in Southeast California with 85,000 acres of nothing but dirt, dust and desert. When all was said and done, the Mopar Ram Runner was declared the winner.

PickupTrucks.com (powered by Cars.com) teamed with veteran SCORE International Off-Road Racing Series Trophy Truck driver Chad Ragland to thoroughly evaluate both trucks on a challenging 4.73-mile evaluation loop.

"I was impressed with Ram Runner's extreme off-road capability," said Ragland. "We jumped, slammed into mounds, cut through deep sand and it came out like a pro, rarely getting into the bumpstops or touching the skid plates."

"Those front-end shocks are amazing. During our first set of runs, I could feel myself tighten a bit as we headed toward the big rocks and ruts, but

then the front end just sucked it all up. Those big springs and shocks had no problems."

"We like how the Ram Runner kit can be built in pieces and stages based on what the truck owner wants and needs," said Mark Williams, Editor, PickupTrucks.com.

"You can go full throttle right away, or take it slower, building your perfect desert explorer at your own pace, factoring in your own budget."

"Our Mopar Ram Runner is the ultimate desert racer based on a production vehicle," said Pietro Gorlier, president and CEO of Mopar, Chrysler Group LLC's service, parts and customer-care brand.

"Mopar Ram Runner offers superior suspension travel to handle rough terrain and greater approach and departure angles for better clearance."

Fred Diaz, president and CEO – Ram Truck Brand and Chrysler de Mexico, said, "We're proud that – under the most punishing real-world test conditions possible – the Mopar Ram Runner takes PickupTrucks.com's top off-road honors over the Ford Raptor."

"Whether you're into desert racing, rock crawling, hunting and fishing or just need a hard-working dependable work truck, there's truly a Ram truck for everyone."

The Mopar Ram Runner kit, developed with successful Baja off-roader Kent Kroeker, includes the following: Pre-Runner Stage II Lift Kit, off-road front bumper, off-road front and rear fenders, off-road rear tire carrier, sport performance hood and cat-back exhaust.

Each element of the kit may be purchased separately. The kit may be installed by do-it-yourselfers or in a Ram dealership.

Mopar officials say the Mopar Ram Runner kit is equal to or better than the competition on a number of fronts. The heavy-duty suspension system can handle practically any abuse the off-road dishes out, they say, adding that front upper and lower control arms, which are three inches longer



According to Chrysler, the Mopar Ram Runner, above, and the Ford SVT Raptor went head-to-head on a punishing 4.73-mile desert loop course in California and the Ram came in 33 seconds faster than the Ford.

than production arms, provide added width and allow greater wheel travel over rough dirt trails.

Front lower control arms are constructed of plate steel in order to withstand off-road punishment. Upper control arms include rebuildable high-angle ball joints. Both inner and outer tie rods are substantially strengthened and contribute to the vehicle's rugged, off-road steering characteristics and capabilities.

Outer tie rods, constructed of forged steel, measure one inch in diameter. Inner tie rods also are nearly 20 percent beefier than production, increasing from .62 inches to .75 inches, according to Mopar.

At the rear, a 5-link coil spring rear suspension is utilized and helps provide a 30-degree departure angle.

The Pre-Runner Stage II kit offers a boost in suspension travel, 14 inches both front and rear, which, according to Mopar officials, is superior to the suspension travel on the Ford SVT Raptor.

The Ram Runner kit, which includes Fox 3-inch internal bypass shocks, offers performance, say Mopar officials, on par with that of an off-road Baja race truck and outperforms the 2.5-inch shocks of the competition.

Ground clearance is approximately 13 inches at the center of the front cross-member and 16 inches at the rocker panels.

Body parts included in the Mopar Ram Runner kit, created with Trophy Truck inspiration, feature a tough-yet-stylish look, say Mopar officials, built to handle the rigors of the off-road while turning heads on the street.

The front bumper is constructed of steel with an integrated skid plate. With a 41-degree approach angle, ample clearance is assured over the deepest off-road obstacles.

Front and rear fiberglass fenders are lightweight, tough and durable with wider wheel wells that allow for tremendous suspension articulation, according to Mopar officials, with zero tire-to-body interference. The eight-inch wider track also provides an imposing, aggressive look, they say.

The stamped aluminum, dual-scooped sport performance hood adds even more to the forceful appearance of the Ram Runner Kit, Mopar says.

The spare-tire carrier is located in the bed of the pickup and enables easier access and provides the ability to transport a larger spare tire, contributing to the overall appearance and "Baja truck feel."

United Way Recognizes GM Effort

DETROIT – The United Way Worldwide recently honored General Motors and the GM Foundation with its Summit Award for creating measurable, sustainable change in Metro Detroit and in communities across the nation.

The award specifically noted the GM Foundation's five-year \$27.1 million grant to United

Way of Southeastern Michigan to create a "Network of Excellence" within seven Metro Detroit high schools designed to increase graduation rates from 50 percent to 80 percent over five years.

In addition to the grant, GM employees contributed over \$6 million through the carmaker's United Way campaign.

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SCAN ME

NHTSA Pushes for Stability Control On Future Large Trucks and Buses

By JOAN LOWY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) – Manufacturers would have to equip large trucks and buses with safety systems that help prevent rollover accidents through computer-controlled braking, under regulations proposed recently by the government.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's proposal would require electronic stability control in new trucks and buses, including motorcoaches.

The safety system senses when a driver might lose con-

trol and automatically applies brakes to individual wheels to keep the vehicle stable and avoid a rollover. It helps prevent skidding across icy or slick roads, and helps motorists keep control when swerving to avoid an unexpected object in the road. The individual wheel braking counters over-steering and under-steering.

Government research shows the technology could prevent up to 56 percent of rollover crashes each year – the deadliest among all crash types – and another 14 percent of loss-of-control crashes.

NHTSA estimates that a stan-

dard requiring the safety systems on large trucks and large buses would prevent up to 2,329 crashes, eliminate an estimated 649 to 858 injuries, and prevent between 49 and 60 fatalities a year.

Cars 'R' Stars Will Feature Custom Classics And Drag Cars

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

one-of-a-kind customs, and commercial and military vehicles.

All of the cars will be judged in a Concours fashion, and the awards will be made from wood from the Packard Plant in Detroit, making them sought-after for bragging rights as well as historical value.

Registration to display cars the day of the show is \$20, but pre-registered collectors will pay a smaller fee of only \$15, which includes car club and class parking.

Alongside the cars, Sommer notes that Cars 'R' Stars will offer food and drink from Nitsche's Hotdogs, sausages and hamburgers and Mastro's Ice Cream, as well as live entertainment, a swap meet with more than 200 vendors, and an arts and crafts area.

Admission to Cars 'R' Stars is just \$5 and children under 12 are free. Gates open at 8 a.m. and close at 3 p.m.

The Packard auto legacy continues to center around the Detroit area because that's where principal auto assembly and road testing took place during the first half of the 20th century.

Production took place at the Packard Plant in Detroit, which had a small test track adjacent to the factory on West Grand Boulevard, but major road testing took place at the old proving grounds in Shelby Township. The proving ground also hosted Chrysler tank testing during World War II. Charles Lindbergh once landed his airplane at the old Packard site, when it was over 300 acres.

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