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"FIRST IN THE HEART OF DETROIT SINCE 1933" NEW CENTER NEWS

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2013 Chevy SS Rear-Wheel Drive Debuts on Zeta Platform

by Irena Granaas

While Metro Detroiters are bracing for the season of snowblowers and subzero temps, Chevrolet already has racing fans dreaming of spring with the recent unveiling of its eagerly anticipated 2013 NASCAR Chevrolet SS race car in Las Vegas.

The rear-wheel-drive performance sedan, powered by the legendary small block V8 engine is Chevrolet's latest entry in the NASCAR Sprint Cup series during the 2013 SpeedWeeks in Daytona, Fla.

Racing action starts Feb. 16 and culminates with the Daytona 500 Feb. 24.

Performance car enthusiasts will have an additional boon to celebrate – Chevrolet has announced a new rear-wheel-drive performance sedan that closely resembles its NASCAR progenitor.

The 2014 consumer version of the Chevrolet SS is slated to debut early next year.

The NASCAR Chevrolet SS is the next of a long line of nameplates Chevrolet has used to challenge NASCAR rivals while improving its product lineup with added driving excitement and performance, say Chevy officials.

The commercial Chevrolet SS will share the award-winning global Zeta rear-wheel-drive architec-

ture of the Chevrolet Camaro and, in the Australian market, Holden's upcoming VF Commodore.

"As a passionate race fan, the debut of the SS NASCAR race car is a genuinely exciting moment for me," said GM North America President Mark Reuss.

"With the SS, Chevrolet is delivering a true rear-wheel-drive NASCAR race car that is very closely linked to the performance sedan that will be evaluated for sale, ensuring that our most loyal enthusiasts will have the opportunity to experience the same thrill every day on the open road that our race car driv-



2013 NASCAR Chevrolet SS

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The new Ram ProMaster will be based on the Fiat Ducato, pictured here.

Ram ProMaster to Go on Sale Next Fall

Chrysler's Ram Truck brand will produce a new commercial van for the North American market.

Called the ProMaster, the 2014 model will go on sale next fall. The ProMaster will join the smaller Ram Cargo Van, or C/V, rounding out Ram's product line-up with a full-size commercial van.

"The Ram ProMaster further strengthens our commercial line-up, offering a full line of work trucks and vans," said Fred Diaz, president and CEO of the Ram Truck Brand.

Chrysler hasn't shared many details, or any photos, of the new full-size van, based on the popular Fiat Ducato, but Chrysler officials are confident that the ProMaster will be popular with their commercial customers.

Though Chrysler says the ProMaster will feature the same iconic styling Ram customers have come to expect, the tech-

nology will be heavily influenced by the Ducato, known around the world for its dependability and versatility.

"We feel that from a product-

feature and launch timing standpoint, the all-new Ram ProMaster van is going to be a home run with commercial customers," added Diaz.

Chrysler Establishes Foundation To Honor Sergio Marchionne

The Chrysler Group LLC Board of Directors has approved the establishment of a charitable foundation in recognition of the leadership and outstanding dedication of Sergio Marchionne as CEO for Chrysler Group LLC.

"Sergio is an exceptional leader with the unique ability to inspire his people and lead change. Creating this foundation is a fitting tribute to all that has been accomplished at Chrysler," said Ronald L. Thompson, Lead Director of Chrysler Group LLC Board of Directors.

"I am extremely privileged and thankful to have this foundation established given the extraordinary commitment made by all stakeholders in the rebirth of Chrysler after the events of 2009," Marchionne said.

The annual contribution over the next five years is expected to amount to a value of five million Chrysler units, with the initial contribution anticipated in December of 2013. The foundation's awards for educational support will begin in 2014 with more specific information and guidelines.

GM App Allows Spark Drivers to Keep Eyes on the Road While Connected

by Jim Stickford

When people think of hi-tech start-up businesses, they tend to think of places like Silicon Valley in California.

The folks at Livio in Ferndale disagree with that notion and believe their Livio Connect automotive technology shows just what we can do in metro Detroit.

Jake Sigal, Livio Connect CEO, said the company got its start back in 2008, a time that wasn't so good for the car industry.

"I know times were tough back then," Sigal said, "but that was also a time when the manufacturers were adding apps to their vehicles. The OEMs became more focused on iPhone and Android apps running in their vehicles from their smartphones."

This emphasis created opportunities for companies like Livio Connect, Sigal said. The firm originally started as a consumer electronics company. They made the first desktop radios that were designed for people who were using the Internet's Pandora radio service.

"Pandora is an online music service," Sigal said. "They have millions of listeners and we came up with a radio that played music from Pandora instead of peo-

ple listening to it on their iPods. We transitioned to software production in 2009."

One of the new software applications the company created is called Livio Connect API, Sigal said.

This app takes apps that run on drivers' smartphones and transfers the graphics information to a vehicle's dashboard graphics display.

"The apps run on your phone but you can use the controls that are displayed on your dashboard screen to run the app," Sigal said. "That way, you don't have to touch your phone and you can keep your eyes on the road."

"We are working with GM on this. They've purchased our software to go in their new Chevy Spark. We even sent two people to the L.A. Auto Show. Right now, we are very focused on producing content that can be used on a smartphone."

The company has about 15 full-time employees, Sigal said, adding that their success is the result of the team's efforts. When explaining how Livio Connect API works, he compared it to a person with a computer and 500 printers. Each printer has its own cable.

If someone had a rig like that,

they'd want something that would connect his computer to those 500 printers without having 500 cables.

That's what Livio Connect API does with smartphones and advanced vehicle dashboard displays. Different OEMs use different technologies. Some use Wi-Fi, some use Blue Tooth and some use USB technology. With Livio Connect, it doesn't matter if you have an iPhone or an Android and it doesn't matter what type of tech – Wi-Fi, Blue Tooth or USB – your car uses.

"Right now, there is no standard language for all these technologies," Sigal said. "We provide the means to connect these different technologies to a dashboard display, making the apps easier and safer to use."

Livio Connect API wasn't developed overnight, Sigal said. They learned that the OEMs wanted to use more tech in their cars and that there was business to be done if someone could create a standard protocol that everyone could use.

"We are a growing business," Sigal said. "We have 15 full-time employees and we want to get to 20 by the end of the year. We are looking to hire the best of the best right here in Michigan."



Newly-named Michigan Science Center will open with special hours.

Detroit 3 Aid in Re-opening Of State's Science Center

Thanks to donations from companies like Chrysler, Ford and GM, the Michigan Science Center – formerly known as the Detroit Science Center – again will be open to the public, starting on Wednesday, Dec. 26.

Due to financial troubles, the Detroit Science Center closed its doors 16 months ago, then board members went on a successful fundraising drive to get the money to reopen.

The announcement that the now-Michigan Science Center would reopen was made in late

November.

Tom Stephens, chairman of the board of directors for the Michigan Science Center, said the center will be open with special hours until Jan. 30, 2013, when a new full schedule will begin.

"This is an exciting first step in the future of the Michigan Science Center," Stephens said. "We look forward to opening our doors and providing families a unique feature exhibit in a dynamic location where they can

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