

Detroit Auto Scene

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Chevy SS RWD Debuts for NASCAR

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ers enjoy on the track on race day."

This is the first time in 17 years that Chevrolet has brought a rear-wheel-drive sedan for sale in the United States. The limited production version of the Chevrolet SS will be a 2014 model, slated to arrive in dealer showrooms in late 2013.

"It's an all-new vehicle that we will be bringing to the United States," said Michelle Maicho, Chevrolet Communications.

"NASCAR really asked and worked with the industry to come forward with vehicles that you can take from the race track to the road, all the brands - Ford, Toyota and ourselves have done that, and our debut is with the SS," Maicho said in explaining the change.

"It just makes sense to have that large V8 rear-wheel-drive vehicle. It just was a nice fit."

The new NASCAR Chevrolet joins a long line of nameplates representing Chevrolet at NASCAR, replacing the Impala, which carved out 151 wins from 1959-64 and 2007-12. Maicho could not share specifics on the yet-to-be-released Chevrolet SS but to get an idea, buyers of the Camaro SS, for example, can opt for the powerful 6.2-liter LS3 V8, producing 426 hp with 420 lb.-ft. of torque, paired with a Tremec six-speed manual transmission.

The available 1LE package includes fully-independent front and rear shocks, unique suspension and drive train components for more than 1g cornering capability, and an intelligent electric power steering system that permits easy maneuverability at parking speeds, while providing higher resistance and more direct feedback at higher speeds.

"Buyers will be very excited to see the close resemblance and technology that Chevrolet takes from the race track to the daily road," Maicho said. "So in the race car and now the production car, there will be a direct linkage from what you watch on Sunday to what you'll see on the road."

Meanwhile, the racing world is ready to embrace Chevrolet's newest SS (Super Sport) race car. That designation was first used by Chevrolet in 1957 to tag a Corvette prototype race car with plans to enter the car in the Le Mans 24-hour race, followed few years later by the 1961 Impala.

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TARDEC/MCC Encourage Students to Study STEM Subjects

by Jim Stickford

The Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center (TARDEC) joined forces with Macomb Community College (MCC) to put on the sixth annual Robotics, Engineering and Technology Days event at MCC's Sports & Expo Center in Warren from Dec. 3-5.

The event, said Dr. Jim Sawyer, provost and vice president of MCC, is meant to get young students interested in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields of study.

When speaking to the students who attended the first day of the three-day event, Sawyer noted that Dec. 3, 2012, marked the 20th anniversary of the first text message being sent. Technology changes quickly and changes how people live their lives.

"You guys are our future," Sawyer said. "As an engineer myself, I worry about the shortage of students entering STEM fields of study. The United States will fall behind if we don't encourage students to enter STEM fields. We need to be innovative and I want to show students just how exciting the STEM world can be."

To that end, TARDEC and MCC put together six different displays of TARDEC hardware to show students just what TARDEC does in practical terms and how a STEM career can produce tangible results.

One display featured LEGO robots. The LEGO education program uses state-of-the-art materials from the Lego Group to get students interested in STEM concepts. Students get to do basic robot programming, teaching robots to navigate and take part in a competition.

Another display features underwater robots. Students get to manipulate an underwater robot.

There was also a Hybrid Military Vehicle known as the Clandestine Extended Range Vehicle (CERV), which demonstrated the latest in hybrid-electric technology and military stealth. The prototype CERV, much like the Willys Jeep of 70 years ago, was designed for quick-paced mobility operations such as reconnaissance, surveillance and target designation. The vehicle pairs an advanced all-wheel-drive diesel



Area middle schoolers examine an Army vehicle at MCC as part of an effort to encourage science studies.

hybrid-electric powertrain with a lightweight chassis.

Students also had the chance to operate some of the same robot soldiers and first responders use in the field. There was also an EV Auto display that educated students about different types of electric vehicles and batteries.

Another display covered renewable energy. Students had the chance to examine four renewable energy technologies - biofuel, wind, solar and hydrogen fuel cells.

Dr. Paul Rogers, TARDEC director, told students that he had a BA in engineering as well as a masters degree and a PhD.

"I've never stopped learning," Rogers said. "Learning is a lifetime sport. Cherish your time in school. I want to say your career is your career. Ask yourself what you want to do and how can you achieve it. Don't let anyone deny you."

Rogers said it's important to expose young students to science early on because it opens

up their world and gives them the information they need to make an informed decision about their future. He can't speak for students, he said, but if they are like his three children, it's a matter of being exposed to STEM fields and the rewards they offer.

Jim Veillette, technology and design teacher at Bloomfield Hills' West Hills Middle School, said he teaches real-world engineering problem-solving in his class. This is the first time they've attended the Robotics day.

"This is a great experience," Veillette said. "It gets the students' engineering juices going. We didn't have things like this when I was a student. I'm hoping to get my students more enthusiastic about science. It seems the more kids are around something, the more they will explore it as opportunities become available to make a career."

Marlene Klann, a counselor at Shelby Junior High School, said she spends a lot of time trying to get students interested in science.

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