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Fred Diaz and the 2013 Ram 1500

## Ram 1500 Earns Honors for 2013 Truck/Utility of Year

The new Ram 1500 has been named 2013 North American Truck/Utility of the Year by a panel of automotive experts.

The award is based on its diverse mix of 49 automotive journalists from the U.S. and Canada who serve as the voting jurors.

The winners were announced at a news conference last week at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

"For the Ram Truck Brand, this

ranks as one of the proudest days in our history," said Fred Diaz, president and CEO - Ram Truck Brand and Chrysler de Mexico, Chrysler Group LLC. "Every truck-maker aspires to win the North American Truck/Utility of the Year. I tip my hat to the folks who worked behind the scenes to make the 2013 Ram 1500 a technological triumph.

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## 2013 Cadillac ATS Named N.A. Car of Year

by Irena Granaas

The 2013 Cadillac ATS triumphed over 14 other vehicles from a global pack of automakers to bring home the North American Car of the Year award.

A panel of 49 automotive journalists gave top marks to the compact luxury sports sedan, scrutinizing every new car released in the past year, including entries from Chrysler LLC and Ford Motor Co., as well as Audi, Mercedes-Benz, Volvo and Infiniti.

Judges announced the award at a press conference opening the 25th annual North American International Auto Show in Detroit. On its corporate Web site, GM touts the ATS as the lightest and most agile Cadillac, featuring an all-new rear-wheel-drive, lightweight architecture and a curb weight of less than 3,400 pounds.

"This is a very meaningful honor for the entire Cadillac team, especially the men and women who build the ATS in Lansing, Michigan, and our dedicated and talented de-

signers and engineers," said Bob Ferguson, General Motors vice president for global Cadillac.

"A car like ATS is the result of incredible commitment and focus. That's the only method for creating a great-performing luxury car."

Previous awards include being named Car of the Year by *Esquire* and by the Motor Press Guild. It recently received a 5-Star overall crash test rating by the NHTSA New Car Assessment Program.

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2013 Cadillac ATS

## MKC Concept – Another New Direction for Lincoln

by Ken Brown

Just weeks after reintroducing itself as The Lincoln Motor Company (its original name from some 90 years ago) and announcing its all-new MKZ midsize luxury sedan, Ford Motor Company's Lincoln brand unveiled its MKC Concept one week ago at the 2013 North American Auto Show in Detroit.

The MKC is a small luxury utility concept. It is smaller than the MKZ. Its 106.9-inch wheelbase compares with the MKZ's of 112.2 inches, and its overall length of 179.3 inches compares with the MKZ's of 194.1 inches. Lincoln describes it as the brand's first-ever "small" vehicle.

Alluding to Lincoln's strategy to launch four all-new products in four years, starting with the MKZ and all targeted at high-growth market segments, Jim Farley, Ford's executive vice president of Global Marketing, Sales and Service and Lincoln, said that the MKC Concept is

aimed at the small luxury utility segment. This segment is the fastest-growing in the luxury market, having experienced more than 200 percent growth in the last four years and 60 percent growth in 2012 alone. Farley views a "true Lincoln motorcar" in this segment to be the brand's next opportunity.

The MKC Concept's exterior styling borrows much of its flavor from the MKZ, particularly including the Lincoln signature splitting grille, sculptured hood, raked windshield, flowing roofline with panoramic glass, and energy-efficient LED lighting technology. The clamshell liftgate incorporates a Lincoln-first side-view cutline, which creates a clean rear-view appearance and maximizes the Lincoln signature full-width taillamps.

The MKC Concept rides on 20-inch premium painted wheels with polished aluminum rims.

The interior of the MKC Concept features seats, pillars, armrests, bolsters, cargo area and other surfaces wrapped in soft premium

leather. The seats also include a unique embroidered Lincoln Star and crimson stitch accents. Other details include appliques cut from layers of reconstructed natural wood infused with a metallic flake for a glistening effect on the steering wheel, upper instrument panel and door panels.

As in the MKZ, the MKC Concept features push-button gearshift selector, which enables a cleaner center console design and also increases console stowage, as well as programmable ride control.

Referring again to the MKZ and the new "Lincoln DNA" also evident in the MKC Concept, Farley mentioned that a strong MKZ advance order bank is already in place just as that new luxury sedan is starting to reach dealerships. He cited a "record response" to the MKZ launch from across the country, including more than 50,000 "hand raisers," with 75 percent of them being owners of other luxury brands, and a record number of pre-orders.

Even so, Farley added, "products are just one part" of what is soon to be known as the Lincoln Experience, and he detailed some high-level personalized customer services being developed.

One of these is the Lincoln Academy, which supports the delivery of luxury hospitality by Lincoln dealers.

The curriculum was developed in consultation with Les Clefs d'Or USA, the official organization of hotel concierges in this country, from whom Farley said a lot is being learned – such as what it means to serve a "client," not just a customer.

For many, the Lincoln Experience will begin with the Lincoln Concierge, a 24/7 on-line shopping assistant that is an industry first and is due to launch in April.

Also, qualified conquest owners will be able to enjoy Lincoln Date Night, which involves dealers providing potential clients with a vehicle for a full weekend plus dinner at a Zagat-rated restaurant, courtesy of the company.

## PPG Celebrates 50th Year of Electrostat

The technology used to make a car is as vital as the tech that goes into a car.

That was the message PPG Industries circulated at the 2013 North American International Auto Show.

Cynthia Niekamp, PPG senior vice president, Automotive OEM Coatings, said the company is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first use of PPG electrostat technology in an automotive plant. In this case, the technology was used in the manufacture of the Ford Thunderbird at the automaker's Wixom facility.

PPG, which has offices in Troy, has kept up with the times and new technology to improve the electrocoat process, making it more efficient in terms of production time and chemical sophistication.

Rick Zoulek, PPG vice president, Industrial Coatings, said the POWERCRON 9000 is the company's first electrocoat formula made without a tin catalyst. This means that manufacturers will need less paint and less electricity to more uniformly electrocoat parts, resulting in less wastewater being generated.

Tom Kerr, PPG vice president, Fiberglass, said that the company's efforts to save OEMs money goes beyond coatings. He said their work in improving composite materials for vehicles has resulted in lighter parts, which translate into fuel saving, important with new federal CAFE standards coming into effect in the next few years.

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Lincoln introduced its new MKC concept car at the 2013 North American International Auto Show.

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