

Cadillac ELR a 'Revolutionary Vehicle' – VP Bob Ferguson

by Jim Stickford

Going green may be seen as a civic virtue, but Cadillac believes that going green shouldn't mean being uncomfortable.

That's the message GM presented at the 2013 North American International Auto Show, when the company introduced to the world the Cadillac ELR, the first luxury extended-range electric vehicle on the market.

Mark Adams, executive director, Cadillac Global Design, spoke about the ELR, saying the vehicle was an elegant synthesis of Cadillac heritage and forward-looking technology.

"This combination of heritage, technology and brand values is what makes Cadillac special," Adams said.

"We call it Art and Science – the artistic expression of innovative technology. Cadillac is bold, even occasionally provocative. We have world-class quality, craftsmanship and precision. And we are innovative – in both technical and design terms.

"And yes, Cadillac is American, and proud of it."

The ELR represents Cadillac's return to world-class luxury, said Adams, and represents the next step in technology. He added that drivers won't have to give up in terms of performance or ride.

Its full range is 300 miles, Adams said, adding that during normal, average commuting days, most drivers won't need to

engage the gas engine, so the vehicle will have zero emissions.

The interior uses hand-wrapped cut-and-sewn interior with authentic materials including semi-aniline leather seating. And to top it off, drivers will also experience the instantaneous torque of an electric motor – as much as a BMW M3, which is 295 lb.-ft. of torque.

Bob Ferguson, vice president of Cadillac Global Engineering, said that technology is great, but Cadillac's greatest asset is the people who work to produce the vehicles.

"ELR is a treasure – not only for its design and technology – but because it will be exclusive," Ferguson said. "ELR will be manufactured in limited numbers at our plant in Detroit.

"In addition to the U.S., we will export ELR only to the largest global luxury markets, including China and Europe. ELR is a very important – and even surprising – car for Cadillac.

"I believe it will be a landmark in Cadillac's history. It sits at the intersection of beauty in design and the best of engineering. And it is engineered right for the times.

"It is a special car that exemplifies Cadillac's greatest achievements throughout history. ELR signals Cadillac's ongoing expansion as a brand that defines the best of technology and reaches a new generation of luxury buyers.

"Simply put, ELR is a revolutionary vehicle, a pivot point for



2014 Cadillac ELR

Cadillac that will allow us to reestablish ourselves as a technological leader in the luxury space."

The ELR performance features will include four selectable drive modes, including a Sport Mode with more aggressive throttle response, suspension settings and steering feel, Adams said, together with a new front suspension that offers "spirited handling and agility."

It also has a new "Re-gen on Demand" feature that enables more driver engagement, Adams said.

"Paddle shifters behind the steering wheel enable the driver to activate regenerative braking," he added. "For example, the driver can pulse the brakes by hand, balancing the weight of the car properly to enter into a corner with your foot ready to accelerate."

Daddys to Dance with Daughters

The City of Warren would like to remind residents about the city-sponsored annual Daddy-Daughter Dance, which will be held on Saturday, Feb. 9, in the City Hall Atrium from 6:30-8:30 p.m. It is \$8 per resident child/adult ticket and \$13 for non-resident child/adult tickets.

It's \$6 for each additional person.

Registration is limited to 300 people and must be completed before Feb. 1. This is a dress-up event – no jeans allowed. Anyone who pre-registers by Jan. 23 will be put in a drawing for a free limo ride with Lavda's Limos. Call 586-268-8400 to register.

Researchers from State Universities Combine Efforts

DETROIT (AP) – Researchers from the University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Wayne State University have been showing how their combined efforts have contributed to some of the technological advances on display at this week's Detroit auto show.

The schools and their researchers have contributed to improvements in safety, performance and fuel economy with more than \$300 million in auto-related research projects over a five-year period, officials with the state's University Research Corridor partnership said.

During a tour of the North American International Auto Show, Wayne State University engineering professor Jerry Ku said the gap between academic and industry research has narrowed in recent years.

"We are very, very aligned. Same direction," said Ku, whose research deals in part with electric vehicle battery packs.

Ku said vehicles such as the Nissan Leaf electric car, the Chevrolet Volt plug-in and Toyota's Prius hybrids also serve as inspiration when coming up with ways to teach about the latest industry advances.

He said students are asked to look at how the technology for such vehicles is developed and selected.

More projects are under way.

'We Have a Very Big Year In Front of Us' – Ammann

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we have these critical product launches . . . 2012 was a solid year, a year of significant progress, good earnings and cash generation for the company overall, and good progress around the world. We got the South America business back to profitability and on a really good trajectory to where we need that business to be in what is a pretty challenging operating environment.

"So to summarize, as I said in my opening comments, this is going to be a big year for us, a big year in execution, a big year in product. . . From a portfolio point of view here in North America, around the world, we feel like we've got all the right pieces in place product-wise. Now it's up to us to execute."

General Motors is banking on its sound financial footing and continuance of the product renaissance started in 2011, which will result in a complete refreshment of 70 percent of GM's vehicle portfolio.

"Our portfolio of new, world-class vehicles puts us on a strong footing to grow profitably," Amman said. "We're launching more vehicles globally than at any time in our history and some of our most important models are targeting the largest markets in the world – the U.S. and China."

At the conference, Ammann noted 2012 was a year of important financial gains for GM, a period during which the automaker saw the GM South America region returned to profitability; reduced its pension risk by \$29 billion; boosted its financial flexibility, and increased its capital ex-

penditures to about \$8 billion for 2012. The good news is a continuation of solid financial performance that GM has posted for the past several years, noted Tom Henderson, manager of GM's Global Financial News & Global Purchasing Communications.


"When we announced our third-quarter earnings, that was the 11th straight quarter of global profitability that we've recorded, so we've had a successful run," he said.

As the global industry grows, GM plans to compete aggressively to sell as many vehicles as possible to maintain or increase its market share, Henderson added, "and on that growth, we're calling for a modest increase in profitability.

"Beginning last year, we began to totally evolve our product portfolio – this renaissance in our portfolio, which began in 2012, will see about 70 percent of all of our nameplates (in the U.S.) either brand new or refreshed through the end of this year . . . and in China . . . from 2011 through the end of 2015, we plan to introduce at least 60 new or upgraded models with our joint venture partners, and since those are the two biggest markets in the world they also happen to be growing – that's where our forecast comes from," Henderson said.

GM also will be releasing a lot of product in Europe, South America and its other international markets, and is able to do so because of its improved financial status.

"We've developed a fortress balance sheet, our brands are getting stronger and we've been disciplined in running our business," Amman said.



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