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

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60-Year Evolution Culminates in 7th-Generation Corvette

by Ross Raybin

General Motors celebrated 60 years of the Corvette by rolling out its newest model at the International Auto Show in Detroit on Jan. 13.

The reveal of the 2014 Corvette Stingray during media week at the IAS grabbed the attention of the press and took social media by storm.

The latest Corvette, referred to as "C7" by enthusiasts, represents the seventh generation of the car released by the automaker and the first since 2005 when the sixth-generation Z06 was released.

Over the decades, the Corvette has earned its reputation as America's sports car through continual refinement and engineering and technological advances.

The first Corvette was introduced at New York City's Waldorf Astoria hotel in January 1953 during the GM Motorama.

What was unique about the vehicle back then was its body, which

was made of composite materials.

The first-generation (C1) Corvette boasted an all-fiberglass body. Over the years, it has evolved into a more durable carbon fiber body.

The third-generation was the first generation of the vehicle to do away with a fiberglass frame and instead use sheet-molding compound. It was a lighter-weight plastic that was more elastic and prevented cracking.

The first carbon fiber parts were used in the sixth generation of the vehicle to make it lighter, however it was the fifth-generation Corvette that really trimmed the weight.

The C5 was one of the rare instances in the world of cars where a new model weighed less than its predecessor.

According to a press release by GM, the 1997 Corvette was larger than its predecessor and weighed nearly 100 pounds less.

One of the largest contributors to the vehicle's weight loss was the use of new body panels that



While the Corvette has changed over 60 years, it has never lost its sense of style or power.

had a higher plastic content and all-new chassis. They used rails and hydroformed sections to provide more strength with less complexity and weight.

The C5 was also the introduction of a new engine (Gen 3 small-block), which weighed roughly 10 pounds less than previous models.

The type of engine used in the

G1 Corvette was a Small Block V8, which wasn't introduced until the car's third year of production.

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Warren Assembly Employees Express Their Pride in Ram 1500 Award

by Jim Stickford

When the Ram 1500 was named Truck of the Year Award at the 2013 North American International Auto Show, it was good news for the bosses who expressed to the media how proud they were.

"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."

But it isn't just the bosses who are proud of the Ram 1500. The people who work at Warren Truck Assembly where the vehicle is made also were proud to hear that the truck they work so hard to produce was named NAIAS Truck of the Year.

Rob Flournoy, World Class Manufacturing (WCM) specialist for UAW Local 140, oversees the people development program at the plant and helps make sure that good suggestions from workers are put into the manufacturing system.

"I've been working at Warren

Truck Assembly since 2000," Flournoy said. "They've been making Ram trucks there since the early 1990s, so when they announced that the Ram 1500 had won Truck of the Year, I felt very proud. We take pride in the truck we make and in the hard work that goes into making the vehicle."

Flournoy said that the way Warren Truck Assembly operates has changed a great deal since when he started working there in 2000. They went from standard operating procedure to adopting WCM methods.

"It's much more of a team effort than when we were using the old techniques," Flournoy said. "In the old days, it was much more of 'I have my job, you have your job, I'll do my job and leave me alone.'"

"Now, we take the time to identify issues before they become problems that result in vehicles having to be taken to the repair shop. The attitude of running the truck off the line and fixing the problem later is no longer the norm."

Flournoy said he was at his cubicle when he first heard the news of the Ram 1500 being named Truck of the Year.

"We haven't done anything yet to celebrate," Flournoy said. "But right now, we're preparing for an

audit by the WCM auditors to see how we're doing. Once that's done, we'll probably do something to celebrate."

Tom Machiniak, training coord-

inator for Warren Truck Assembly, said the news of the award spread quickly. First, emails were sent to officials at the plant and the news "cascaded" down to the

workers in short notice, Machiniak said.

"What's funny is that I told my

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Detroit Big 3 January Sales Figures

GM Retail Sales Up 24 Percent

General Motors Co. announced last week that it sold 194,699 vehicles in the United States in January, up 16 percent compared with a year ago. Retail sales were up 24 percent. Fleet sales were down 2 percent.

"The year is off to a very good start for General Motors," said Kurt McNeil, vice president of U.S. sales operations. "There's a sense of optimism among our dealers that only comes when you pair a growing economy with great new products. We started to see the benefits in 2012 with vehicles like the Chevrolet Sonic, Cadillac ATS and Buick Verano. Now in 2013, we're entering the sweet spot of our product plan in a growing economy."

Sales of GM's full-size pickups were up 32 percent.

Ford Car Sales Up 34 Percent

Ford Motor Company's January U.S. sales of 166,501 grew 22 percent year-over-year - with retail sales up 24 percent. Gains were made across the product lineup, with cars up 34 percent, utilities up 23 percent, and trucks up 11 percent for the month.

"Ford is off to a strong start this year, with Fusion and Escape delivering January sales records and F-Series seeing a particularly strong reception this early in the year," said Ken Czuby, Ford vice president, U.S. Marketing, Sales and Service.

Sales of the all-new Ford Fusion totaled 22,399 vehicles in January, a 65 percent increase versus a year ago and Fusion's best January sales ever. Fusion broke its January 2011 sales record by 56 percent.

Chrysler Sales Up 16 Percent

Chrysler on Feb. 1 reported U.S. sales of 117,731 units, a 16 percent increase compared with sales in January 2012 (101,149 units), and the group's best January sales since 2008.

The Chrysler, Dodge, Ram Truck and FIAT brands each posted year-over-year sales gains in January compared with the same month last year. The Dodge brand's 37 percent increase was the largest sales gain of any Chrysler Group brand in January. Chrysler Group extended its streak in January to 34 consecutive months of year-over-year sales gains.

The all-new Dodge Dart continued on its upward sales trend with a 17 percent month-over-month increase in January, the car's best monthly sales performance since its launch.



General Motors Advanced Restraint Systems Senior Staff Engineer Scott Thomas demonstrates the industry's first front center air bag in the fall of 2011 at the GM Proving Ground.

GM Introduces Two Industry-First Air Bags

Vehicle safety is important and GM has been promoting its advances in passive safety technology with the introduction of two new industry-first air bags on four of its best-selling 2013 cars and crossovers.

The 2013 GMC Acadia and 2013 Chevrolet Traverse equipped with power seats and all 2013 Buick Enclave midsize crossovers come with GM's front center air bag. Developed in collaboration with safety restraint supplier Takata, this air bag is designed to help provide an energy-absorbing cushion between drivers and front passengers in side impact crashes and rollover

events, as well as added protection to the driver in far-side impacts.

Acadia, Traverse and Enclave are among the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's 2013 Top Safety Picks.

"The front center air bag is not required by federal regulation, and no other air bag in passenger vehicles today offers the type of restraint and cushioning this air bag is designed to provide for front occupants," said Scott Thomas, senior staff engineer in GM's advanced restraint systems.

Far-side impacts, where the vehicle is impacted on the passenger side of the vehicle, were studied by

GM through an analysis of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System database.

GM found that far-side impact crashes, which the front center airbag primarily addresses, accounted for 11 percent of the belted front occupant fatalities in non-rollover impacts between 2004 and 2009 involving 1999 model year or newer vehicles.

Far-side fatalities also represented 29 percent of all the belted front occupant fatalities in side impacts.

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