

Detroit Auto Scene

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Ford AWD Sales Up 72% Since 2009

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continues to grow in the East and Great Lakes regions, as expected, but nationwide AWD sales have grown, particularly in the Pacific Northwest over the past six years," said Erich Merkle, Ford sales analyst.

The increase in demand by American car buyers is seen throughout the country, as improved technologies like Ford's intelligent all-wheel-drive system is keeping customers calm and confident on the road.

In fact, AWD is the number one purchase consideration for Ford customers looking to buy a small utility vehicle in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states – outpacing well-established factors such as reliability, value for the money and fuel economy.

In total, 20 percent of all retail cars and utilities purchased nationally in 2012 had AWD, according to Polk data.

Stingray Convertible, Coupe to Arrive Later this Year

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"It's fitting to introduce the new Stingray convertible on the global stage at Geneva, because Corvette is the face of Chevrolet the world over," said Susan Docherty, president and managing director of Chevrolet and Cadillac Europe. "It is an icon that has long been recognized and admired even in countries where it's never officially been offered."

All of the performance technology and capabilities introduced on the Corvette Stingray coupe carry over to the convertible. The only structural changes are limited to accommodations for the folding top and repositioned safety belt mounts. Central to the Corvette Stingray's driving experience is an all-new, more rigid aluminum frame structure, which is 57-percent stiffer and 99 pounds (45 kg) lighter than the current steel frame.

All models are powered by the new LT1 6.2-liter V8, with an estimated 450-hp (335 kW) and 450 lb-ft of torque (610 Nm). As no structural reinforcements are required for the convertible, both models share almost identical power-to-weight ratios.

The LT1 combines several advanced technologies, including direct injection, Active Fuel Management and continuously variable valve timing to support an advanced combustion system designed to balance power and efficiency. The new Corvette Stingray is expected to improve upon the current model's fuel economy of 13.6L/100km (EPA-estimated highway fuel economy of 26 mpg).

With the top up, the Corvette Stingray convertible is designed for what GM calls a refined driving experience. A thick, three-ply

fabric top, along with sound-absorbing padding and a glass rear window, contributes to a quiet cabin and premium appearance.

With the top down, GM boasts that the Corvette Stingray's signature profile is further accentuated. Behind the seat backs, dual black accent panels enhance the character lines of the tonneau cover. Corvette Stingray's signature "waterfall" design originates in the valley between the nacelles, bringing the exterior color into the interior.

Additional highlights of the all-new Corvette Stingray coupe and convertible include a sculpted exterior with advanced high-intensity discharge and light-emitting diode lighting and racing-proven aerodynamics that balance low drag for efficiency and performance elements for improved stability and track capability.

The interior has genuine carbon fiber and aluminum trim, hand-wrapped leather materials, dual eight-inch configurable driver/infotainment screens, and two new seat choices – each featuring a lightweight magnesium frame for exceptional support advanced driver technologies, including a five-position Drive Mode Selector that tailors 12 vehicle attributes to fit the driver's environment and a new seven-speed manual transmission with

Active Rev Matching that anticipates gear selections and matches engine speed for perfect shifts every time

Lightweight materials, including a carbon fiber hood on all models and a carbon fiber removable roof panel on coupes;

composite fenders, doors and rear quarter panels; carbon-nano composite underbody panels and a new aluminum frame help shift weight rearward for an optimal 50/50 weight balance that supports a world-class power-to-weight ratio.

Avenger, 4-Door 200 Top Safety Picks

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To win the Top Safety Pick+ award vehicles must earn good ratings for occupant protection in at least four of five evaluations.

This is the second consecutive year the automaker has had 12 vehicles listed as IIHS Top Safety Picks, including the Dodge 200 and Avenger, awarded Top Safety Pick+ honors. The Avenger and Dodge 200 4-Door are both based on the Chrysler JS midsize car platform and are manufactured at the Sterling Assembly plant in Sterling Heights.

"We are honored to receive these awards," said Mark Chernoby, Chrysler Group senior vice president – engineering. "Occupant safety is a key ingredient to the design and manufacture of all Chrysler Group vehicles."

The remaining Chrysler Group IIHS Top Safety Pick winners for 2013 are the all-new Dodge Dart in the small car segment; the Chrysler 300 and Dodge Charger large family cars; the Chrysler

Town and Country and Dodge Caravan minivans; the Fiat 500 in the minicar category; the Dodge Journey, Durango and Jeep Grand Cherokee midsize SUVs; and the Jeep Patriot small SUV, when equipped with optional side air bags.

The IIHS website cites 2012 as the date the insurance institute introduced the small overlap test to further improve occupant protection in frontal crashes. The test simulates what happens when the front corner of a car collides with another vehicle or with an object like a tree or utility pole. During the test, 25 percent of a car's front end on the driver's side strikes a five-foot-tall rigid barrier at 40 miles per hour with a test dummy belted in the driver seat.

In a 2009 IIHS study of vehicles with good ratings for frontal crash protection, small overlap crashes accounted for nearly a quarter of the frontal crashes involving serious or fatal injury to front seat occupants.

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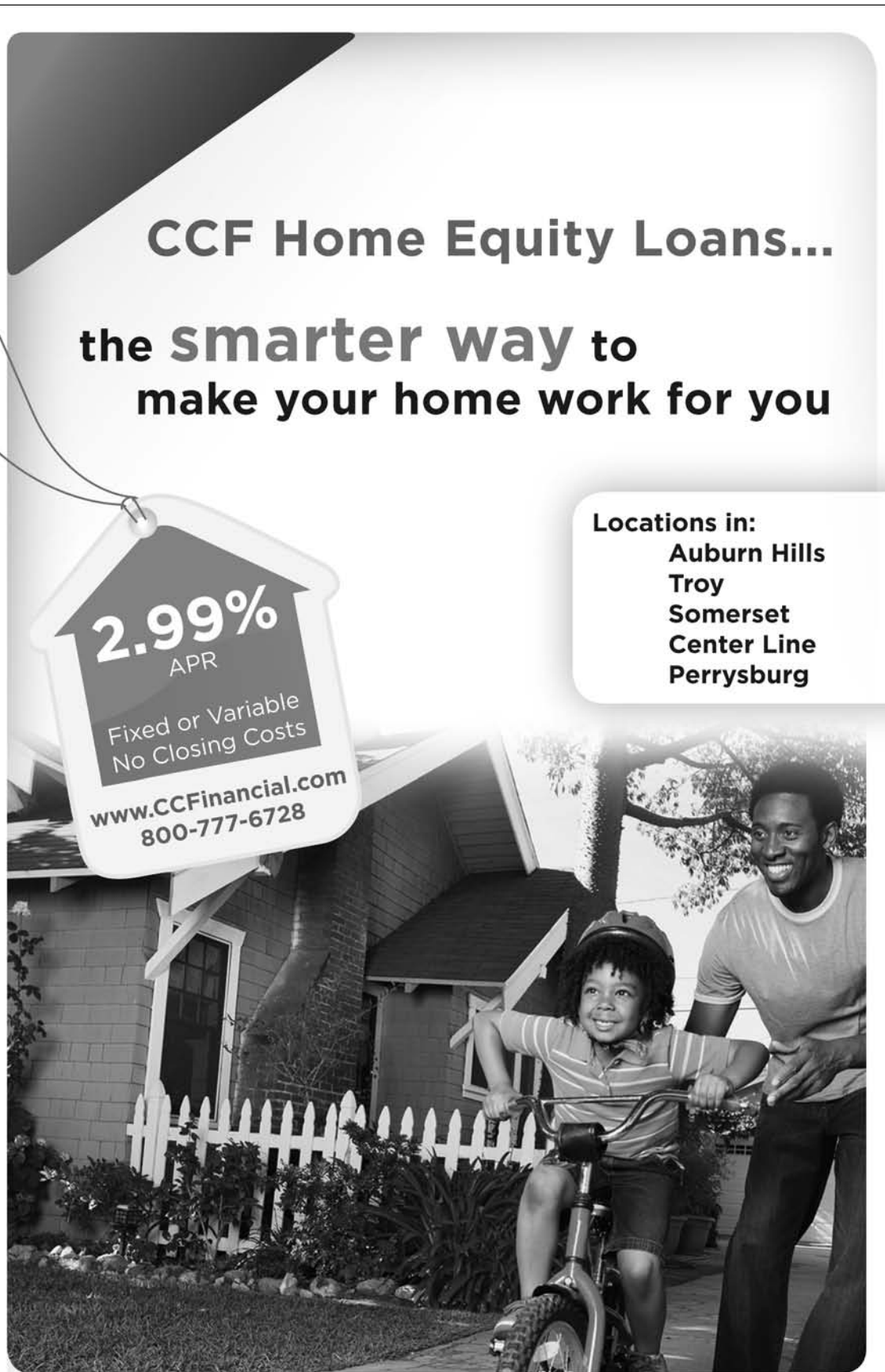
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