

Ford Expands Taxi Market With Transit Connect, C-MAX

Only Taxi in U.S. to Offer CNG

Ford Motor Company has added Hong Kong to the list of global cities served by its Transit Connect Taxi.

"Ford Transit Connect Taxi has proven itself in taxi fleets across the U.S.," said Raj Nair, group vice president, global product development. "Now, we are building on that success, offering the vehicle for sale in even more markets, including global cities like Hong Kong."

The Transit Connect Taxi Ford unveiled in Hong Kong comes equipped with a Ford-engineered, clean-burning liquefied petroleum gas fuel system. Nair said the vehicle is designed to run on Hong Kong's well-established LPG infrastructure, providing dependability, low maintenance and long-range travel.

In the United States, Ford owns nearly 60 percent of the taxi market, Nair said. On sale since 2010, Ford Transit Connect Taxi serves passengers in some of the most demanding taxi markets, including New York City, Chicago, Miami, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, Philadelphia and Boston.

The 2014 Ford Transit Connect Taxi comes with a new powertrain – a 2.5-liter four-cylinder engine paired with a new, fuel-efficient six-speed automatic transmission – providing drivers with quick response as well as durability, low-rpm cruising and an expected best-in-class highway fuel economy rating.

In addition, Transit Connect will be the only taxi in America offered with a compressed natural gas and LPG engine prep package. Conversion to CNG and LPG is supported by Ford Qualified Vehicle Modifiers, enabling significant fuel cost savings, Nair said.

Ford's second-generation Transit Connect Taxi features a lower vehicle height, providing improved roof clearance for taxicab companies to place advertising on the cabin roof. A new interior hood release gives drivers easy access, said Nair, to check fluid levels prior to starting a shift.

The new Transit Connect Taxi also is longer, offering seating for five and increased cargo capacity. It has an expected best-in-



2014 Transit Connect

class 60.5 cubic feet of cargo volume behind the second row, Nair said. He added that the vehicle can accommodate a compressed gas tank, while still leaving ample room for luggage.

The Transit Connect Taxi floor has been lowered for improved access to the cabin, and it can be modified for wheelchair accessibility through Ford's Qualified Vehicle Modifier program, Nair said.

In addition to Transit Connect Taxi's success, Ford C-MAX Hybrid is being adopted by taxi operators right from dealer lots. Taxi operators like the vehicle's utility, maneuverable size and class-leading U.S. EPA combined

fuel economy of 43 mpg. C-MAX Hybrid taxis are on the road in San Francisco and New York.

Taxi operators attribute Ford C-MAX Hybrid's class-leading fuel economy, 522-mile overall range and spaciousness to its success in taxi fleets, Nair said.

C-MAX Hybrid offers best-in-class passenger volume, plus best-in-class front- and second-row headroom and legroom, and plenty of room for cargo, Nair said.

In addition, Ford C-MAX Hybrid's ease of entry and exit is one of its top-rated features by customers – important for passengers quickly entering and exiting the vehicle.

Lear's 3Q Sales Hit \$3.9 Billion, Up 11 Percent

Third-quarter sales at Lear Corporation are up 11 percent from the same period last year.

In its recently released financial results, Lear reported sales of \$3.9 billion, core operating earnings of \$207 million – up 15 percent – net income of \$113 million and adjusted earnings per share of \$1.45, up 12 percent.

This compares with sales of \$3.5 billion, core operating earnings of \$179 million, net income of \$121 million and adjusted earnings per share of \$1.29 in the third quarter of 2012.

The company also reported record quarterly earnings in Engineering Project Management Services (EPMS), as well as its 16th consecutive quarter of year-over-year margin improvement.

"I'm pleased with our solid financial results in the third quarter," said Matt Simoncini, Lear's president and chief executive officer. "Our sales are increasing faster than the overall industry, and the investments we have made in the business have improved our competitive position and are driving profitable growth."

Third quarter, global vehicle production increased 4 percent from a year ago, reflecting production increases in all of the major automotive markets in the world, Simoncini said. Production was up 8 percent in China, 6 percent in North America and 2 percent in Europe and Africa.

Sales in 2013 are expected to be approximately \$16 billion, up from the prior outlook of approximately \$15.8 billion. Core operating earnings are expected to be approximately \$835 million.

Compuware Takes Leadership Step Toward Cars of Future

by Jim Stickford

Call it a gathering of the old and the new – a working-together of automotive and computer experts.

How?

Compuware is taking its latest software designs to show off to automotive companies at the upcoming Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas in January.

These designs are aimed at integrating the latest automotive infotainment hardware with software designed to better integrate the car with the driver, said Steve Surhigh, Compuware vice president of Automotive Solutions.

"A lot of people don't know that Compuware has been working with the OEMs and Tier 1 suppliers in the connected vehicle space," Surhigh said.

He defined the connected vehicle as late-model cars and trucks with hardware and connection ports that allow drivers to interact with other vehicles and with the information "cloud."

This new technology will become even more important as time goes by.

"The Consumer Reports car ratings just came out," Surhigh said. "And what's interesting is the role that infotainment systems played in the vehicle rankings. The manufacturers have done a pretty good job designing things like brake systems and powertrains."

"But the new driver interface with a vehicle's infotainment

units have really affected the way people look at cars."

In short, Surhigh said, OEMs have pretty much mastered the technology people associate with cars. It's the new tech where they are more vulnerable.

The infotainment system, Surhigh said, has in the last decade evolved from the navigation system. The seven-inch screen below the radio now does so much more than display navigation displays.

"The display has evolved into almost a tablet-like device," Surhigh said. "We now have apps that can be loaded on it."

The type of information displayed on the screen has grown as well, he said. It now can show information coming from the car – speed or oil pressure. And it can now show information coming from the information cloud – traffic conditions or weather.

"The availability of that data is changing how a vehicle's 'cockpit' is being structured," Surhigh said.

"It's no longer just a seven-inch screen that sits in the middle of the dashboard. The displays now bleed into the instrument cluster behind the wheel."

These instrument clusters are no longer just physical dials connected to parts of the engine that tell mileage or gas levels or speed.

These displays now are electronic and can even shift composition depending on exterior conditions, Surhigh said.

And this new hardware requires new software that can

interact with the driver and the data streams.

"We've been producing telematics software for the past 15 years or so," Surhigh said.

"That software does things like check a vehicle's safety and security, helps with location-based services and makes possible the remote locking and unlocking of doors, as well as vehicle slowdowns in case of theft. We're now edging to infotainment systems, which is where the OEMs are spending their money these days."

Surhigh said Compuware, in conjunction with a hardware partner he declined to name right now, will present a "head unit" or "basically a navigation system" that will help drivers make decisions on what routes they will take.

This system, Surhigh said, will track things like traffic patterns. It will also "learn" a driver's commuting habits, so when there is heavy traffic on the driver's regular route, the unit will put up an alternative route that goes around the delay.

The autonomous car is coming, Surhigh said. And the demand for better technology opens up opportunities for companies like Compuware to interact with manufacturing companies like the Big Three.

"This technology is what they're putting their money on," Surhigh said.

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