

Ram 1500 'Rose to the Top' As 2014 Truck of the Year

Motor Trend has selected the Ram 1500 as its 2014 Truck of the Year.

The announcement was made last week at the Chrysler Warren Truck Assembly Plant, the birthplace of Ram Trucks.

A full report on *Motor Trend's* comprehensive Truck of the Year testing will be featured on *MotorTrend.com* and in the February 2014 issue of *Motor Trend*.

Nine Truck of the Year contenders were put through an extensive battery of testing designed to evaluate virtually every aspect of each vehicle, said Chrysler spokesman Nick Cappa. To determine which truck deserved top honors, the *Motor Trend* judges took the nine contenders to the Continental Tire Automotive Proving Grounds in Uvalde, Texas. There, the judges tested each truck's performance with the following exercises:

- Standard testing (without load) – 0-60 mph and 1/4-mile acceleration, 60-0 mph braking, and maximum lateral grip;
- Limit handling (without load) – Closed-course cornering, braking and acceleration;
- Tow/payload testing – 0-60 acceleration repeated with trailers attached (pickups) or payload secured (vans), loaded to 75

percent of each truck's maximum rating (as equipped);

- Road looping – Highway and real-world replication.

Once testing was completed, the judges convened to determine which truck would be crowned Truck of the Year, Cappa said. The winner is not chosen from a direct comparison against the other contenders, but rather as a result of how each contender measured up against the award's six criteria: Design Advancement, Engineering Excellence, Efficiency, Safety, Value, and Performance of Intended Function.

Cappa said the judges were particularly impressed with the performance of the Ram 1500's new EcoDiesel V6 engine as well as its eight-speed TorqueFlite transmission, a combination that boasts a towing capacity of up to 9,200 pounds.

Further, *Motor Trend's* Real MPG testing supported what the team learned in Uvalde: None of the gas-powered half-ton trucks in this year's competition – be they V6 or V8, 4x2 or 4x4 – could match the EcoDiesel's mileage.

Cappa also said that the Ram's optional air suspension system

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Chrysler CEO Sergio Marchionne at Truck of the Year ceremony

GM Invests in Orion Plant and Local Community

by Jim Stickford

GM is doing well by doing good.

The automaker is helping reduce energy costs and trash production by using landfill gas to produce electricity for two plants – one in Ft. Wayne, Ind., and one in Lake Orion.

Rob Threlkeld, global manager of Renewable Energy for GM, said that the plant in Indiana and the Orion Assembly Plant were chosen for the landfill gas projects for a couple of reasons unique to the two sites.

"There are landfills that produce gas from waste that are owned by private companies near this Orion facility and our plant in Ft. Wayne," Threlkeld said. "They were producing steam to power heating and cooling as well as for the paint departments. But thanks to our energy conservation efforts, we have managed to reduce the demand for steam, so it made sense to use some of that excess capacity to generate electricity."

To convert the gas into electricity, GM has purchased \$24 million in electrical generation equipment. The new equipment

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Late-Month Surge Boosts November Sales

by Jim Stickford and the Associated Press

The Thanksgiving holiday weekend and an ongoing shift from cars to small SUVs boosted the auto industry in November.

Buyers took advantage of Black Friday deals, and analysts say the late-month surge boosted November sales above a strong month last year.

Chrysler rose a surprising 16 percent, General Motors posted an increase of 14 percent while Ford sales increased 7 percent.

GM dealers delivered 212,060 vehicles in the United States in November, up 14 percent versus a year ago and the highest November sales in six years. Retail sales were up 19 percent and fleet sales were down 3 percent.

"November sales were strong at all four of our brands, and demand was robust for everything from cars to crossovers to the industry's newest and best full-size pickups," said Kurt McNeil, vice president, U.S. Sales Operations. "The sheer number of award-winning new models we have helped us grow faster than the industry for the second month in a row."

GM's product momentum will continue unabated. For example, the new 2014 Cadillac CTS, which is building availability, was recently named *Motor Trend's* Car of the Year, an *Automobile Magazine* "All Star" and one of *Car and Driver's* 10 Best cars, McNeil said.

Chevrolet sales were up 13 percent and retail deliveries rose 20 percent. Sales of Chevrolet cars increased 19 percent, with Malibu up 41 percent, Volt 26 percent, Impala 20 percent and Camaro 14 percent. Retail deliveries of the Cruze were 39 percent

higher and Impala more than doubled. The Chevrolet Cruze, Equinox and Volt had their best November sales ever.

Sales of the Chevrolet Tahoe were up 23 percent, the Traverse rose 21 percent and the Silverado was 12 percent higher.

GMC sales increased 20 percent, with the Sierra up 22 percent and the Acadia crossover up 108 percent, which keeps it on track for its best year ever.

Buick deliveries increased 13 percent and the brand is on track for its best year since 2005. November was Buick's 19th consecutive month of year-over-year retail sales growth.

Cadillac sales increased 11 percent and retail sales have grown in each of the past 18 months, driven by the success of the new XTS and ATS.

Chrysler reported U.S. sales of 142,275 units, a 16 percent increase compared with sales in November 2012 (122,565 units), and the group's best November sales since 2007.

The Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge and Ram Truck brands each posted year-over-year sales gains in November compared with the same month a year ago, said Chrysler spokesman Ralph Kiesel. The Jeep brand's 30 percent increase was the largest sales gain of any Chrysler Group brand during the month.

"Our all-new Jeep Cherokee is off to a terrific start with more than 10,169 units sold in its first full month on sale," said Reid Bigland, head of U.S. Sales. "Our launch emphasis on Jeep Cherokee quality is now being rewarded with brisk sales and helping Chrysler Group achieve our 44th consecutive month of year-over-year sales growth."

In its first full month of sales, the all-new 2014 Jeep Cherokee mid-size SUV recorded sales of 10,169 units, Kiesel said. The addition of the Cherokee to the product lineup helped the Jeep brand attain its best November sales ever. In addition, the Jeep Grand Cherokee, Jeep Wrangler, Jeep Patriot and Jeep Compass each posted year-over-year sales gains in November, led by the 31 percent increase in Compass sales.

Four Chrysler vehicles set sales records during the month of November. The Wrangler, Patriot, Dodge Dart, and Ram Cargo Van each recorded their best November sales ever. The Dart achieved its record with a 44 percent year-over-year sales gain.

Chrysler Group finished the month with a 91 days supply of inventory (500,536 units). U.S. industry sales figures for November are internally projected at an estimated 16.3 million units Seasonally Adjusted Annual Rate (SAAR).

Ford's November U.S. sales of 190,449 vehicles are up 7 percent overall compared with last year. Retail sales are up 9 percent, for the best November performance since 2004, said Ford spokesman Erich Merkle.

The November retail sales performance of 147,021 vehicles reflects broad-based gains, with passenger cars up 6 percent, utilities up 3 percent and trucks up 17 percent, Merkle said. Ford passenger cars achieved the best November retail sales result since 2002, with Ford Fusion and Ford Fiesta both posting records.

"We continued to see sales increases across our full family of

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2014 Jeep Wrangler



2014 Chevrolet Tahoe



2013 Lincoln MKZ