

Silverado Bests Ram, Toyota for Award

Four Wheeler magazine has named the 2014 Chevrolet Silverado as its 2014 Pickup Truck of the Year.

The award followed a week-long test evaluating on- and off-road performance of new pickups, said GM spokesman Tom Wilkinson.

"Four Wheeler really puts pickups to the test, on-road and off, and the results showcase the capability and refinement that our team built into the new Silverado," said Jeff Luke, GM executive chief engineer.

The all-new Silverado was named a Best of the Best for 2014 by AutoWeek, 2013 Fleet Truck of the Year by Automotive and Business Fleet magazines, and the Detroit Free Press 2014 Truck of the Year. Silverado is a finalist for the 2014 North American Truck of the Year, which was scheduled to be announced Jan. 13 at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit.

Ali Mansour, Four Wheeler's technical editor, wrote "Dirt, trucks, and backcountry exploration - it's not only what we enjoy, but the core of our annual week-long wheel-fest that is Pickup Truck of the Year (PTOTY) isn't about which truck can do one thing the best, but rather, what model is the top all-around contender.

"We don't haul trailers or excessive amounts of cargo, but we do rake in over 1,000 miles of on- and off-road driving conditions. To participate in the late-model truck showdown, the pickup has to be all-new or significantly revised from the previous model year, have a two-speed transfer case, a production run of at least 1,500 vehicles available in the U.S., and be on sale by Jan. 15, 2014."

He went on to write that over the course of the test week, the magazine covers "an immense

variety of terrain and specific challenges to uncover the trucks' strengths and weaknesses."

Each truck, Mansour wrote, is scored based on how it performs in a series of categories. The judges place particular weight on the wheeling portion of the test.

Mansour wrote that trail performance counted for 30 percent in the judging. Empirical factors such as price, payload, mileage and ground clearance counted for a total of 25 percent. How the vehicle handled on pavement counted for 20 percent, while judgments on interior counted for 15 percent and exterior 10 percent.

"We test each vehicle just as the manufacturer offers it," Mansour wrote. "This means no modifications are done to things such as tire pressure, low-hanging bumpers or easy-to-kill steps."

This year's participants included a Chevy Silverado 1500 Crew Cab Z-71, Ram 2500 Outdoorsman Crew Cab, and Toyota Tundra SR5 CrewMax.

"Our testing arena is sunny Southern California," Mansour wrote. "Why? Because SoCal has mountains, desert, rocks, sand, and endless roads - ranging from fast and windy to smog-soaked and traffic-filled. If there is one state where you can get your fill of a truck's overall performance and quality, California is it."

"We start off our test by taking a closer look at items that are not so easy to see. We're talking about transfer case skids, suspension geometry, and undercarriage layouts. For this, we racked the trucks on a series of vehicle lifts at Mel Wade's premier 4x4 shop, Off Road Evolution, located in Fullerton, California.



2014 Silverado

"Once we view what's hiding beneath, we twist the trucks on a 30-degree ramp to gather ramp travel index scores. After the preliminary testing, we set out to the outreaches of the Southern California desert, where we spend

the remainder of the week hitting trails and twisty backroads."

"In what was one of the closest Pickup Truck of the Year scores in recent memory, the half-ton Bowtie just edged out the other two," Mansour wrote.

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Buick Achievers Scholarship Apps Now Available

The Buick Achievers Scholarship Program, funded by the General Motors Foundation, will accept applications for 2014 scholarships from now through 5 p.m. EST on Friday, Feb. 28.

This is the fourth year the Buick Achievers Scholarships will be awarded to students who excel in the classroom and give back to the community, said GM Foundation spokesperson Maria Mainville.

To be eligible for the program, high school seniors or current undergraduate students must be looking to obtain a college degree in science, technology, engineering, math, also known as STEM, or other eligible fields related to the auto industry.

Created in 2011, the Buick Achievers Scholarship Program has awarded \$16.5 million to students across the U.S., Mainville said.

This year, the program will award 100 scholarships of up to \$25,000 per year, renewable for up to four years, or up to five years for qualified engineering programs.

"The Buick Achievers Scholarship Program is helping students across the U.S. pay for and obtain a quality secondary education focused on STEM," said GM Foundation president Vivian Pickard.

"Through the program, we are helping to shape the next generation of leaders and innovators for the automotive industry and for other sectors important to the future success of our country."

Students from the United States and Puerto Rico are eligible.

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