

## Detroit Auto Scene

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## 2014 Will be 'The Year of the Lease Pull-Ahead,' Says Swapalease.com

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years, Buick was very aggressive with its leasing programs. More leases mean more chances to offer pull-ahead deals.

At one point, Hall said, Buick lease rates compared with sales were as high as 33 percent.

"We crunched the numbers and knowing what we know, we picked Buick at number one," Hall said. "But there isn't a lot of difference between Buick and the other OEMs on our top 10 list."

Buick is followed by, in order, Chevrolet, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Ford, Audi, Volkswagen, Infiniti, Toyota and Honda.

Hall said no Chrysler brands were on the list, but he expects that to change in the next couple of years.

"For a long time, Chrysler wasn't pushing leasing hard," Hall said. "But, as the quality of their vehicles have improved, I expect that to change."

Ultimately, Hall said, both OEMs and dealers like leasing because it essentially doubles the opportunity to make a deal with customers. Most leases last about 36 months. Many customers who buy cars do so on a 72-month purchase plan – double the length of a lease.

Customers like leasing because they don't get stuck with the same car for six or seven years.

"Young people are used to having a service plan for their cell phones in which they make monthly payments," Hall said. "But they're also used to getting the latest phone with the latest technology."

"I believe they will use cars in the same way."

"Imagine having a car for six years and being unable to get one with the latest technology?"

## GM Donates to Smithsonian

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founding donor of the "America on the Move" exhibition that opened in 2003 at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. The exhibit is located inside the General Motors Hall of Transportation, named in recognition of the company's support of the Smithsonian Institution.

GM's relationship with the Smithsonian dates to 1954 when the company donated the first mechanical heart pump to the Smithsonian's Museum of American History Division of Science, Medicine and Society, Mainville said.

A team of GM scientists and engineers developed the mechanical heart pump that made possible the world's first open heart surgery.

Since then, the automaker has contributed other notable items to the institution, including "Alice," the world's first computer-controlled electric robot.

# Naming Contest Evolves into Special Edition Jeep Altitudes

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brand then created a limited run of Altitude models across the Jeep lineup.

"The unique 'blacked-out' theme of the Jeep Altitude models resonated so well with consumers two years ago that it makes perfect sense to bring them back now, particularly since we have new versions of the Cherokee and Grand Cherokee," said Mike Manley, Chrysler's Jeep Brand president.

"What began as a production-intent concept and naming contest generated significant buzz and evolved into a lineup of special edition Jeep vehicles that appeal to many consumers – especially those wanting a very distinct, aggressive and edgy look."

The new, special edition 2014 Cherokee, Grand Cherokee and Wrangler Altitude models will arrive in Jeep showrooms this spring, Manley said.

Jeep Compass Altitude and Jeep Patriot Altitude models are available now, said Goyer.

Based on the Latitude model, the 2014 Jeep Cherokee Altitude is available in 4x2 or 4x4 configurations powered by either the 2.4-liter MultiAir2 Tigershark I-4 engine with up to 31 mpg, or the 3.2-liter Pentastar V6 engine, which delivers best-in-class 271 horsepower and towing capabilities of 4,500 lbs., Manley said.

Both engines are mated to the mid-size SUV segment-exclusive nine-speed automatic transmission.

The U.S. Manufacturer's Sug-

gested Retail Price (MSRP) for the 2014 Cherokee Altitude models is \$24,995 for 4x2 models and \$26,995 for 4x4 models (plus \$995 destination), Goyer said.

The 2014 Jeep Grand Cherokee Altitude is based on the Laredo model and is available as a 4x2 or 4x4. The standard 3.6-liter Pentastar V6 engine produces 290 horsepower and 260 lb.-ft. of torque, and is mated to a new eight-speed automatic transmission, delivering up to 25 mpg highway.

The U.S. MSRP for the 2014 Grand Cherokee is \$35,290 for 4x2 models and \$37,290 for 4x4 (plus \$995 destination), Goyer said.

Based on the Sahara model, the 2014 Jeep Wrangler Altitude's exterior highlights include a

matte black grille with gloss black throats, head lamp rings and Jeep badge, gloss black front and rear bumper appliques and 18-inch seven-spoke aluminum wheels, a standard body color Freedom Top and matte black "WRANGLER" decal on the hood, Manley said. The Dual Top with premium Sunrider soft top is optional.

Available in two-door and Unlimited four-door models, the Wrangler Altitude is powered by a 3.6-liter Pentastar V6 engine producing 285 horsepower and 260 lb.-ft. of torque.

Mated to a standard six-speed manual or available five-speed automatic transmission, Wrangler Altitude employs a Command Trac transfer case with 2.72:1 low range, Goyer said.

## Chrysler's Lee Moves Up in Transmission

Chrysler has appointed Robert (Bob) E. Lee as interim head of Transmission Powertrain and Driveline Engineering, replacing Mirca Gradu.

Lee will keep his current responsibilities as head of Engine, Powertrain and Electrified Propulsion Systems Engineering. Lee also continues to serve as Powertrain Coordination on the Group Executive Council (GEC) for Fiat S.p.A. He has held both roles since 2011.

Gradu has left the company to pursue other interests, said Chrysler spokesperson Shawn Morgan.

In his new position, Lee is responsible for the design, development and release of all transmission and driveline systems for Chrysler Group.

Lee was appointed vice president and head of Engine, Powertrain and Electrified Propulsion Systems Engineering in July 2011. In that capacity, he has responsibility for directing the design, development and release of all engines and electrified propulsion systems for Chrysler products.

Lee joined the company in 1978 as an engineer-in-training in the Chrysler Institute of Engineering program and has since held a variety of positions in different areas of powertrain.

His professional background includes:

- 2009 – vice president, Engine and Electrified Propulsion and Advance Powertrain Engineering;
- 2004 – vice president, Powertrain Product Engineering, Chrysler LLC, DaimlerChrysler;
- 2003 – director, Powertrain Systems & Controls;
- 1999 – director, Rear-Wheel Drive Engine Engineering;
- 1997 – executive engineer, Rear-Wheel Drive V-Engine Engineering, Chrysler Corporation;
- 1993 – senior manager, Jeep and Truck Base Engine Engineering;
- 1987 – supervisor, Advance Engine Systems Development;
- 1984 – senior engineer, Engine Performance Development.



Cadillac Design Director Andrew Smith unveils the brand's new 2015 ATS Coupe to hit dealerships this year.

## Caddy's First Compact Luxury Coupe Debuts

Cadillac introduced the new 2015 ATS Coupe to the world at the 2014 NAIAS.

Bob Ferguson, senior vice president, Global Cadillac, called the ATS Coupe a quicker and more personal addition to the award-winning ATS product line.

Designed to be lighter, more agile and more engaging than its competitors, said Ferguson, it extends Cadillac's product-driven growth and the brand's tradition of dynamic luxury coupes.

"This is a brand new Cadillac," Ferguson said.

"This is an era of growth for a brand that's more than 100 years old and it feels like it's a startup."

Cadillac's first-ever compact luxury coupe goes on sale this summer, Ferguson said, adding that the new Cadillac entry offers drivers the choice of rear-wheel drive or all-wheel drive, and the power from a 2.0L turbocharged four-cylinder or a 3.6L six-cylinder.

In all combinations, he said, ATS Coupe takes advantage of its lightweight and strong structure to deliver exhilarating performance – with efficiency – with a segment-leading power-to-weight ratio.

"The 2015 Cadillac ATS Coupe is a natural step in the brand's progression, and another fun-to-drive and technologically advanced product for a new generation of drivers, extending our target groups," said Uwe Ellinghaus, chief Marketing officer, Global Cadillac.

"It is an exclusively distinctive American alternative, unique in its class, yet delivering a sporty and sophisticated driving experience rivaling the world's best."

Ellinghaus said Cadillac is moving into new corners of the luxury market and vehicles like the ATS make that possible.

Like the sedan, Ellinghaus said, the ATS Coupe's driving dynamics are rooted in mass efficiency, which helps make it one of Cadillac's lightest and most agile models ever – and the lightest car in

the compact luxury coupe segment. The 2.0L Turbo engine is upgraded from the current ATS sport sedan, he said, to deliver nearly 14 percent more torque, taking it to 295 lb.-ft.

This gives the standard ATS Coupe an advantage in power and weight over similarly equipped coupes such as the BMW 428i, he added.

Greater torque means greater pulling power, for a greater feeling of responsiveness at low speeds, and helps the ATS Coupe achieve an estimated 0-60 time of 5.6 seconds, Ellinghaus said.

"More power with less weight is always a better combination for performance," said David Leone, Cadillac executive chief engineer.

He added, "And the ATS Coupe offers one of the best power-to-weight ratios in the segment, making it feel lighter, more direct and responsive."

"Engineers vetted the ATS's performance on the track, and the Coupe benefits from that exhaustive validation – all matched with Cadillac's trademark refinement."

Elements that contribute to the ATS Coupe's balanced performance and responsive characteristics include nearly perfect 50/50 weight balance and low center of gravity, as well as five-link independent rear suspension featuring lightweight, high-strength steel and efficient straight link designs, Leone said.

Other features include:

- A multi-link double-pivot MacPherson-strut front suspension with direct-acting stabilizer bar;
- Underbody aerodynamic shields;
- Premium, belt-driven electric variable-effort steering gear from ZF Steering Systems;
- Brembo front brakes;
- Eighteen-inch aluminum wheels;
- Available all-wheel drive.

The 2015 ATS Coupe rides on the same 109.3-inch wheelbase as the sedan, but features its own bodywork.

The roof, doors, rear fenders

and trunk lid are unique to the Coupe, along with a specific front fascia and front fenders that accommodate a wider track than the sedan.

It is also the first production model to wear Cadillac's revised crest, said Andrew Smith, Cadillac executive design director.

The Coupe also has an aggressive stance, Smith said, with wider front/rear tracks than the sedan, enhanced by short overhangs and sheet metal that wrap tautly around the tires. Standard 18-inch wheels are exclusive to the Coupe.

Bold lighting elements are a Cadillac signature feature and the ATS Coupe advances that tradition, Smith said, with available light-emitting diode, or LED, headlamps with Adaptive Forward Lighting.

Base models feature projector-beam headlamps, while high-intensity-discharge headlamps and front vertical LED light signatures are included on all but the standard model.

Illuminating outside door handles on Performance and Premium collections lend technologically advanced style and function to the Coupe.

All models feature LED tail-lamps and a rear-center stop lamp.

The ATS Coupe also includes capless fueling.

## Fiat Completes Chrysler Purchase

As the saying goes, it's now a done deal.

Fiat completed its previously announced acquisition of all of the VEBA Trust's membership interests in Chrysler on Jan. 21, said Chrysler spokesperson Shawn Morgan.

Chrysler Group is now a wholly-owned subsidiary of Fiat. The consideration for the acquisition consisted of:

- A special distribution paid by Chrysler Group on Jan. 21, 2014, of \$1.9 billion (Fiat directed its portion of the special distribution to the VEBA Trust as part

of the purchase consideration);

• A cash payment by Fiat to the VEBA Trust of \$1.75 billion.

Both Chrysler Group and Fiat funded their payments from available cash on hand. Chrysler Group and the UAW agreed that Chrysler will provide for additional contributions by Chrysler Group to the VEBA Trust of \$700 million in four equal annual installments, the first of which was paid in connection with closing of the transaction with Fiat.

As part of the transactions, court procedures are now unnecessary.