

January 2012

CAR TALK

CORVETTE NEWS:

We should all be very grateful to Chevrolet for the fact that they chose to commemorate their 100th birthday by producing a Centennial Edition Corvette, rather than a Centennial Edition Silverado pickup or Centennial Edition Malibu. And, all too often, special commemorative edition models from any manufacturer only consist of a special badging or color scheme. But, as we've been discussing for several months now, the Centennial Edition Corvette package really provides some substantial upgrades.

DID YOU KNOW? According to the consulting firm Strategic Vision, 87% of all new Corvette buyers are over the age of 50.

How many of you took a look at the e-mail from Steve Ferrara giving us a peek at the 2013 Corvette 427 Convertible Collector Edition model? If you haven't, please do. It's already being touted as the fastest and most capable convertible in Corvette's history. It's equipped with the 427ci LS7 engine from the Z06, still rated at 505 hp, which is the most powerful engine ever installed in a production Corvette convertible and will only be available with a six-speed manual transmission.

They say that next Saturday, the 21st, around 1 P.M. our time, the first 427 Convertible in the new 60th Anniversary Package will be auctioned off at the Barrett-Jackson auction in Scottsdale; live on SPEED TV.

Now, this new 60th Anniversary Package is really exciting to me. Like the Centennial Edition, this will be available on all 2013 Corvette models. And, of course, this will be the final year for the C6 generation Corvette. This Anniversary package features an Arctic White exterior with a Blue Diamond leather-wrapped interior with suede accents. The convertible models will also have a blue top.

Also part of the 60th Anniversary Package is a ZR-1-style rear spoiler, special badging, gray-painted brake calipers and the "60th" logo on the wheel center caps, steering wheel and seat headrests. An optional graphics package adds full-length racing stripes in Pearl Silver Blue, *including a tonal stripe stitched into the convertible top, extending the graphic theme over the roof.* I love the looks of this car. Combine this look with Z06 or ZR-1 performance and you've got a collector Vette for sure.

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For 2013, all Corvettes will feature special 60th Anniversary cross-flag badges on the front fascia and the interior "waterfall" panel on the convertible model, as well as 60th logo in the instrument panel gauge cluster and on the sill plates.

They say orders for 2013 Corvettes will begin in March.

Important note: If you're a fan of the Carlisle Blue exterior color (this is a one-year 2012 color only) or the Centennial Edition Package, you need to know that production of those will end this winter. The last chance to order Carlisle Blue Corvettes is February 9-13, while Centennial Edition Package orders will wrap up in the first week of March. Tentatively, the last chance to order a 2012 Corvette will be March 19.

Don't know how many of you have heard about this. In October, GM announced a recall of 6,006 2011 and 2012 Corvette coupes. They say there have been absolutely no reported problems from owners, but during European-spec Corvette testing, it was discovered that the rear hinges on these cars fail to meet Federal safety standards. The hinges could possibly allow the hatch to separate from the vehicle in a crash. The recall involves the replacement of both rear hinges.

A BIT OF RACING NEWS:

Chevrolet is back into IndyCar racing. It will once again be supplying engines to various teams in the 2012 IndyCar series.

The IndyCar series has made a lot of changes to the team's cars in recent years in an attempt to make the racing better and attract more fans. You know how race fans are; if any one team is too fast and they win too much, the fans get bored and quit watching. If the cars are made to slow down to improve competition, the fans get bored. If all the cars are made the same to accent driver talent, the fans get bored. So, IndyCar is trying to offer some variety in the race cars, while still ensuring good competition. Much like NASCAR has done very successfully.

So, for 2012, IndyCar teams will all use identical Dallara chassis, but they will have a choice of three engine manufacturers: Honda, Lotus and Chevrolet. The new rulebook mandates the use of a twin-turbo 2.4-litre direct-injection V6. Output will range between 550 and 750 horsepower, depending on the track they're at.

If you're not a race fan, why should you care about this? Well, there's a good chance that a turbocharged V6 engine will end up in the Corvette sooner or later, so

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the more development Chevrolet is able to do on it, the better the street engine will be.

REGULATORY NEWS:

There hasn't been a lot of car-related regulatory action for a while, but there are a few items to talk about right now.

Mileage Rate Deduction - The IRS has set the standard business-mileage deduction at 55.5 cents per mile for 2012. The mileage calculation includes the cost of fuel along with other vehicle fixed and variable operating expenses, such as depreciation, insurance, tires, etc.

Standards for Keyless Ignition - The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (lovingly referred to as the NHTSA) wants to create uniform minimum standards to cover the types of keyless ignition controls installed in new cars. The goal is to make it easier for drivers to stop a moving vehicle during a panic situation and to alert drivers who unintentionally attempt to leave the vehicle without it being "locked in park" or with the engine still running.

They are proposing to require a half-second hold time to shut down the vehicle when the driver pushes the ignition control, with the engine responding within a second of the initial push. They are also proposing a standardized sound and volume for an audible warning to be given to the driver when the car is being turned off without being in the park position. The new requirements would likely go into effect with Model Year 2015.

Fuel Economy Requirements - The EPA and the NHTSA have issued draft regulations to set fuel economy and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions limit for model year 2017-2025 vehicles. The fleetwide average will rise from 35.5 mpg at the end of 2016 to 54.5 mpg for MY 2025 - a nearly 5% annual increase. The government estimates that the standards will cost about \$157 billion to implement, with new benefits ranging from \$252 billion to \$358 billion. It also estimated that the rules would add \$2,000 to the price of a new passenger car sold in 2025, but save more than \$6,000 in fuel costs over the vehicle's lifetime.

And how about this; the fuel-economy standards were agreed to in principal earlier this summer by most of the automakers. Really?????